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DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORY
AND
CIVILIZATION

Forgotten Alternatives

Jewish Territorialism as a movement of political
action and ideology (1905-1965)

Laura Almagor

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

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Abstract

Starting with the so-called Uganda Controversy of 1905, the Jewish Territorialists searched for areas outside Palestine in which to create settlements of Jews. This study analyses both Territorialist ideology, and the place the movement occupied within a broader Jewish political and cultural narrative during the first half of the twentieth century. It also shows Territorialism's relevance beyond a specifically Jewish historical analytical framework: Territorialist thought and discourse reflected several more general contemporary geopolitical trends and practices. The most notable of these trends was inspired by the international policymakers' (post-)colonial approach to peoplehood, territory and space, before, but also directly following the Second World War. This approach relied on notions and practices like migration, colonialism and colonisation, biopolitics, agro-industrial science, as well as "(empty) spaces" and un(der)developed territories. Studying Territorialism, therefore, helps to shed new light on both Jewish political history, and on the evolution of modern geopolitical thinking.

The empirical emphasis of this study is on the second wave of Territorialism, which commenced in the mid-1930s and was mainly represented by the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation. This period ended sometime in the mid-1960s, with the Freeland League abandoning its Territorialist activities in favour of Yiddish cultural work. Despite this focus on the later phase of Territorialism, the Freeland League's origins lay with Israel Zangwill's Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO, 1905-1925). As Zangwill's legacy was still strongly felt in the Freeland-days, an exploration of these Territorialist origins forms part of this analysis as well. Lastly, the movement's ideological direction was defined by a handful of intellectuals: Zangwill in the ITO-days; Ben-Adir, Joseph Leftwich, and, most importantly, Isaac N. Steinberg in the Freeland League-era. Accordingly, the lives and works of these people, as well as the archival material they left behind, are central to this dissertation.

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While studying a transatlantic movement for a homeless people, I became somewhat transatlantic and homeless myself. This is by no means intended as a lament: my homelessness brought me to many old and new homes, in Italy, the Netherlands, Israel and the United States. But a home becomes a home also because of the people that build and inhabit it. Therefore, I commence with some words devoted to these people.

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During the time that I was working on this project, I had to say goodbye to my grandmother, Miriam Almagor. As a “first class driver” serving with the Auxiliary Territorial Services of the British Army during the Second World War, she cruised Egypt and Libya, dined with King Farouk, and met the young future Queen Elizabeth. A life-hungry and feisty lady, with a healthy sense of (obscene) humour, Miriam knew exactly how to work her charm. The Jewish history that offers the framework for my intellectual travails also took my infant grandmother from interwar Poland to mandate Palestine. There, she belonged to the generation that witnessed and participated in the birth of the State of Israel. At the age of sixty, several twists of fate brought her from Israel to the Netherlands. This is where she lived out the remaining three decades of her life, in peaceful exile, but with strong ties to her original home in the Middle East.

My grandmother was first and foremost Israeli. Jewish tradition was part of her cultural heritage, but religion meant very little to her. “You and your Jews!” she would exclaim when I told her about my work. For her, “my Jews” stood in the way of me finally settling down. In other moments, she would listen attentively, her dark eyes fixed on the flowery pattern of the table cloth in front of her, until she would suddenly cut me off: it was time for her favourite TV show to come on. Despite my grandmother’s mild disinterest in my research, she cared limitlessly about us, her granddaughters. In addition to her love, she gave me the Hebrew language, an attachment to the art of storytelling, and even a sense of my own not entirely defined connection to “Jewishness”. Colourful, stubborn, and humanly dignified, up until the very last choice that she made: that was my “savta”. It is to her that I dedicate this work.

Introduction

During a research visit to Jerusalem in April 2012, acting upon a sudden craving for yoghurt, I wandered into a small convenience store in Katamon, my temporary neighbourhood. The owner was a friendly man in his forties, and, sensing my foreignness based on my peculiar Hebrew, he asked me what the reason was for my stay in the Holy City, if not to make Aliyah. I had been repeatedly answering this if-not-Return-to-the-Land-then-what?-question for several weeks, and indeed for most of my adult life when visiting Israel. I tried to keep my answer short and to the point: I was there to do research on non-Zionist Jewish nationalism, which did not involve emigration to Israel. The man behind the counter appeared interested but puzzled. He had just told me that his parents had migrated from Iraq some decades before and would have never left for any other place than Israel. After a few contemplative seconds, the storeowner looked up at me and asked: "But aren't the history of Jewish nationalism and the history of the State of Israel one and the same thing?"

This question holds the assumption that Jewish nationalism is synonymous with Palestine-focused Zionism, a claim that Noam Pianko correctly describes as the result of Jewish historiography's tendency to erroneously conflate Jewish nationalism, Zionism and national sovereignty.¹ If we follow Anthony Smith's claim that nationalism is a "doctrine of authenticity", Zionism, appealing to the traditional Jewish connection to Palestine, may have had a natural advantage over other Jewish political ways of thinking.² Nonetheless, the exact meaning of this Zionism can be revisited by abandoning the rigid prism of the Jewish nation-state through which the concept and movement has traditionally been analysed.³ At the same time, even if we do accept a more state-focused interpretation of Zionism, this still does not mean that other ideas and movements did not exist or that they were merely marginal and should be disregarded when mapping modern Jewish political history.

¹ Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 130; Ezra Mendelsohn's statement that Zionism shows the triumph of nationalism and the nation-state—as if only Zionism was concerned with those—serves to illustrate this point: Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 145.

² Anthony D. Smith, "Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism," *Israel Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1995): 15. Also quoted in Simon Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), xxxiv.

³ Dimitry Shumsky, "'This Ship Is Zion!' Travel, Tourism, and Cultural Zionism in Theodor Herzl's Altneuland," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 104, no. 3 (2014): 471.

The history of Jewish Territorialism is one of several examples contributing to this broader Jewish political picture. Commencing with the so-called Uganda Controversy of 1905, up until the 1960s (and officially until 1979), the Jewish Territorialists searched for areas outside Palestine in which to create settlements of Jews. They recognised an imminent threat to Central and Eastern European Jewry, consisting of both the physically violent treatment of Jewish individuals and the damage or outright destruction of Jewish tradition and culture through state persecution or forced assimilation.

This dissertation analyses both Territorialist ideology and the place the movement occupied within a broader Jewish political and cultural narrative during the first half of the twentieth century. It also shows Territorialism's relevance beyond a specifically Jewish historical analytical framework: Territorialist thought and discourse reflected several more general contemporary geopolitical trends and practices. The most notable of these trends was inspired by the international policymakers' (post-)colonial approach to peoplehood, territory and space, before, but also directly following the Second World War. This approach relied on notions and practices like migration, colonialism and colonisation, biopolitics, agro-industrial science, as well as "(empty) spaces" and un(der)developed territories. Studying Territorialism, therefore, helps to shed new light on both Jewish political history and on the evolution of modern geopolitical thinking.

The empirical emphasis of this study is on the second wave of Territorialism, which commenced in the mid-1930s and was mainly represented by the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation. This period ended sometime in the mid 1960s, with the Freeland League abandoning its Territorialist activities in favour of Yiddish cultural work, mainly in North America. Despite this focus on the later phase of Territorialism, an analysis of the movement's meaning and ideology cannot ignore Territorialism's earlier history, namely that of the Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO). ITO-leader Israel Zangwill's legacy was still strongly felt a decade after his death in 1926. Therefore, chapter 2 will be devoted to these initial years (1905-1925) of Territorialist history. As several other studies of Territorialism have already covered this period, this chapter largely relies on such secondary sources. By contrast, primary sources form the basis for chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for the three subsequent, chronological chapters. After providing the reader with a general overview of the "essentials" of Territorialist ideology, I introduce six themes that run as red threads throughout the rest of the thesis:

(1) Jewish culture and politics, (2) religion/tradition and modernity, (3) the Jewish Diaspora, (4) space and science, (5) colonialism, and (6) Territorialism and Zionism. These themes reflect and encompass the most important features of Territorialism, and together they offer the analytical framework through which the movement's history can be best explored and assessed. Each of the chronological chapters 2, 3, and 4 will commence with a short factual overview of the years under consideration, followed by a thematic analysis of Territorialism during the period discussed. For chapter 2, as mentioned, this period is formed by the ITO years between 1905 and 1925. Chapter 3 deals with the Freeland League between 1933 and the onset of the Second World War, while chapter 4 focuses on the movement in the post-war period, ending in the mid-1960s. As the exact ideological focus and activities of the movement were not static but shifted over time, the relative weight of importance of each of the themes will differ between the different chapters. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the chronological-thematic approach will allow the reader to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and history of Territorialism, both as part of Jewish political and cultural history, and as a reflection of more general—partly forgotten—features of twentieth century history.

This introduction opens with a short discussion of the development of the scholarly field dealing with modern Jewish political history. As the current work both relies on and reacts to this historiographical corpus and tradition, I then situate this study in relation to both older and recent scholarship. After briefly discussing the existing body of work on Territorialism, the second part of this chapter contextualises the movement's history by providing the reader with an overview of the Jewish political landscape during the first half of the twentieth century.

The genesis of Jewish political historiography

The relative absence of non-Zionist elements in Jewish collective memory is also reflected in modern Jewish historiography. Yosef Yerushalmi, in his hugely significant 1982 study *Zakhor*, argues that Jewish historical consciousness and with it the entry of Jewish history into mainstream historiography only occurred after this history had wrested itself from the Jewish religious tradition of which it had been an intrinsic part for millennia. It was the quest for statehood that rendered the Jews historical actors and that turned Jewish history into Jewish *national* history. As Hannah Arendt saw it, Zionism was the ultimate antidote to Jewish worldlessness and the only true political answer to the anti-Semitism

that had culminated with unprecedented magnitude during the Shoah. This development from a Jewish self-perception as an a-historical, religious people to a historical nation was soon 'hijacked' by Zionists. They turned the Jewish narrative into a mono-history in which only Zionism could prevail, leaving no space for different parallel narratives.⁴

This Zionist interpretation of history was the rejection of what has been termed a "lachrymose" attitude, focusing on the victimised status of Jews throughout history, and inherited from the nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums* era. This anti-lachrymose approach was pioneered by Simon Dubnow (1860-1941) and his followers, and further developed most famously by historian Salo Baron (1895-1989).⁵ Eventually, by making modern nationhood a central historical end goal, Dubnow and Baron argued, the lachrymose account of Jewish history would be counteracted. Such a politically organised corporate existence would mean a return to a previously existing situation, which, according to Dubnow, had been most strikingly achieved through the former Jewish self-government within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Interestingly, therefore, it was not Zionism, but in fact Dubnow's Diaspora Nationalist political philosophy termed "Autonomism"⁶ that constituted one of the first connections between Jewish history and nationalism: obtaining a collective autonomous existence for Jews

⁴ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor, Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 99; Ron H. Feldman, "Introduction: The Jew as Pariah: The Case of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975)," in *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), lii. The otherwise formidable scholar Shlomo Avineri asserts that Jewish survival has always been dependent on the connection to the land, and not just any land, but Palestine: Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981). Yuri Slezkine phrases the Jewish entry into history as the result of modern Jewish nationalism and socialism turning Jews from "mercurian" into "apollonian": Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 37. Gabriel Piterberg discerns a conviction within Zionism that only nations that are sovereign over the soil of their (imagined) homeland are in charge of the shaping of their own destiny and thereby write themselves into history: Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London/New York: Verso, 2008), 246. For a controversial critique of Zionist historiography see Shlomo Sand, *The Words and the Land: Israeli Intellectuals and the Nationalist Myth* (Los Angeles/Cambridge: Semiotext(e), 2011), 155-180.

⁵ Joshua Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013), 101, 106; Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," *The Menorah Journal*, no. 14 (1928). At the same time that he reacted against it, Karlip argues, Dubnow adopted elements of this lachrymose account in his own depiction of Russian-Jewish history: Joshua M. Karlip, "Between External Persecution and National Renaissance: Simon Dubnow's Lachrymose Vision of Russian-Jewish History," in *Jews in the East European Borderlands*, eds. Eugene M. Avrutin and Harriet Murav (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012).

⁶ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 24; David Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things: Jewish Autonomy in Late Habsburg Austria," *Leo Baeck Year Book* 52(2007): 89. For a recent analysis of Dubnow's Autonomism and its influence on Russian-Jewish politics see Simon Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). Following other scholars as well as the historical actors themselves, at places in this thesis, I use the terms "Autonomism" and "Diaspora Nationalism" interchangeably. It should be noted here that, strictly speaking, the second category contains the first one.

within the different European settings in which they lived would reinstate their status as conscious historical actors.⁷ By forging their relationship as citizens with the state, Jews would move beyond pure nationalism towards democracy and federalism.⁸

C.S. Monaco argues that this historiographical attachment to a nationalism-focused perception of modern Jewish history has blinded scholarship to a longer, nineteenth-century continuity of Jewish social action.⁹ Indeed, Jewish enlightener and historian Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891) saw the historical significance of the Jews as a result of their actual and potential political and public existence. He believed that the final material manifestation of this existence would have to be found in a specific geographical location, Palestine, but that it was already existent in Europe.¹⁰

By contrast, the other main voices of the *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment) had stressed that after the fall of the ancient Judaeen state, the Jews' active place in history had become limited to the intellectual sphere and was divorced from politics.¹¹ According to the *maskilim* (the Jewish enlighteners) this limited historical perception needed amendment. Both the growing *maskilic* attachment to the Holy Land as a geographical place for the Jewish future, and the simultaneous failure of the *maskilim* to ensure full cultural and political acceptance for Jews in Europe would lay the groundwork for the emergence of Zionism towards the end of the nineteenth century.

As soon as Palestine became a centre, if not *the* centre, for Jewish scholarship, especially after the establishment of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1925, Jewish historiography automatically became tied up with this very significant location. *Yedi'at ha-arets*, the concept of "knowing one's land", gained central importance.¹² Several scholars of the generation following those of Graetz and Dubnow respectively were crucial for defining the historiographical agenda. One of the most influential Jewish historians to do so was Ben-Zion Dinur (Dinaburg, 1884-1973). Dinur was, arguably even more so than Dubnow, a prime example of the combination of historian and historical

⁷ David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past : European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 32; Cecile Esther Kuznitz, *Yivo and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 8

⁸ Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 89.

⁹ C. S. Monaco, *The Rise of Modern Jewish Politics: Extraordinary Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4, 8, 182.

¹⁰ Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 27-8.

¹¹ Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 2.

¹² Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, 75, 91; Barbara E. Mann, *Space and Place in Jewish Studies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 68.

political actor. Dinur's Zionist convictions largely influenced his scholarly endeavours to write a mono-directional history of the Jews with one fixed end-goal: a Jewish state in Palestine. In turn, Dinur's work contributed to the Zionist project itself by obscuring alternative diasporic histories.¹³ Still, as David Myers argues, Dinur never outrightly denied the existence and meaning of the Diaspora. His acknowledgement of the importance of the *galut*—the rather negatively coloured Hebrew word for Diaspora—in fact helped to strengthen his claim that Zionist ideology was not part of a partisan agenda, but was an actual historical force that should be acknowledged and reinforced through scholarship.¹⁴

By 1978, the Israel-based historian Jacob Katz declared that such a historiographical justification of the Jewish State's existence was no longer necessary: with the establishment of the State of Israel, Herzlian Zionism had been fulfilled.¹⁵ Nonetheless, even after 1978, Jewish scholarship has been slow to accept different approaches to the study of modern Jewish political behaviour: when it was accepted that historiography was no longer of central importance to legitimise the Zionist project, other paths were simply dismissed as irrelevant. Katz himself described the road to modern Jewish politics as consisting of three phases: thesis (the ancient belief in a miraculous return of the Jews to Zion), antithesis (the early modern and modern rejection of this belief) and the nineteenth century synthesis of these two. This synthesis was a culmination of the Emancipation project into a modern nationalist solution, driven not by the practical need to emigrate, but by a socially unifying idea, represented solely by Zionism.¹⁶

Both David Myers and Benjamin Nathans have argued that scholarship has by now finally entered a post-Zionist stage, thus allowing space for different approaches to the

¹³ Jonathan Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steve Zipperstein (Cambridge: 2004), 4.

¹⁴ Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, 9, 131, 136, 141.

¹⁵ Jacob Katz, "The Forerunners of Zionism," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (London: Cassell, 1996), 34-5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37, 41. This tripartite dialectic was originally ascribed to Hegel and Fichte, but was also used by other modern Jewish political figures. Dubnow had termed premodern Jewish separatism as the historical thesis, emancipation as the antithesis and national autonomy as the new synthesis: quoted in Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 102-3. Diaspora Nationalist Abraham Golomb described the Yiddish scholarly centre YIVO, the "flagship institution" of Diaspora Nationalism, established in Wilna in 1925, as the synthesis of Jewish folk culture (thesis), and the Haskalah and European culture in general (antithesis): Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 2, 65. Arguing against dominant Zionist interpretations, Golomb believed that Jews had not existed outside of Judaism, but that Jewish tradition had always made the past part of the present, through its rites, commemorations, and celebrations: Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, xviii. For more about Golomb, see Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 189-202.

study of Jewish history.¹⁷ The removal of mainly politically inspired limitations to the writing of non-Zionist Jewish history has opened the door to the mapping of other parts of the broader history of Jewish politics. Jewish Territorialism constitutes one of these parts. Like the current-day revival of secular Yiddish culture (which Jeffrey Shandler calls “Yiddishland”) it offered “an alternative model of Jewish at-homeness, one that can exist not only instead of the State of Israel, but also alongside [it].”¹⁸

Lost Atlantis

The broadened scope of the Jewish political scholarly field reveals complex realities. Zygmunt Bauman has stated that “there were few, if any straight roads in modern Jewish history”.¹⁹ This does not mean that developments differing from what is considered to be the main narrative were deviations or unnecessary bends in the road. Rather, the road should be seen as much broader, and populated by many different parallel travellers, some going alone, some interacting with one another, some going in completely different directions, and several of them changing lanes during the course of their journey. The road and those who walked it constitute the larger narrative of Jewish political behaviour.

The writing of the history of Territorialism forms part of the recent trend of studies recovering what David Myers has called the “Lost Atlantis” of non-statist Jewish nationalism. This trend is one of three factors that Myers sees as paving the way for more research on Territorialism. The second factor is the fact that the more general field of the study of nationalism, pioneered by figures such as Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner and Miroslav Hroch, amongst others, has by now become an established scholarly tradition. The relative solidity of this field creates new space for studies revisiting and redefining received wisdom about specific expressions of nationalism. Thirdly, the Israeli New Historians of the 1980s and 1990s, represented by scholars like Avi Shlaim, Benny Morris, Tom Segev and Ilan Pappé, have opened the door for novel ways of thinking about the

¹⁷ Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 13. Myers sees Herzlian Zionism as fulfilled, although not the cultural and spiritual Zionism envisioned by Ahad Ha'Am: Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, 11-2. One of these previously ignored approaches is a by now accepted comparative analysis of the history of the State of Israel: Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.

¹⁸ Jeffrey Shandler, *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language & Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 49.

¹⁹ Quoted in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, “Emancipation and the Liberal Offer,” in *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, eds. Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 28.

Jewish political past.²⁰ This Jewish political historiography can now exist for its own scholarly sake, instead of serving a larger political, mainly Zionist agenda.²¹ Formerly unexplored histories can also help to illuminate the more general history of the development of modern Eastern European nationalisms. After all, in the multi-ethnic context in which Jewish nationalism in all its appearances arose, the Jews were not the only stateless nation, but existed alongside and in dialogue with for instance Polish and Ukrainian national movements.²²

In his study of the political outlooks of Simon Rawidowicz, Mordecai Kaplan and Hans Kohn, Noam Pianko shows that these nowadays marginalised Zionist figures, who were far from marginal in their own times, imagined a version of Zionism that did not focus on statehood, but at the same time did not negate the importance of Palestine. Pianko's analysis challenges the classic choices between assimilation and autonomy, nationalism and humanism, and diaspora and homeland that dominate much of Jewish historiography and Jewish self-perception.²³

Like Pianko, I too believe that much is to be gained by analysing Jewish political behaviour, especially in the interwar period, and I also argue that endeavours to define Jewish nationality and nationhood did not necessarily include the quest for a Jewish state. At the same time, their divergent aims did not render these initiatives and the people

²⁰ David Myers mentioned the "Lost Atlantis" concept, as well as the three developments paving the way for an increased interest in Territorialism, during an informal graduate student gathering with professor Steven Aschheim at the UCLA history department on 13 February 2014. For a critical analysis of the New Historians' place in Israeli historiography, as well as of this historiography in general, see Penslar, *Israel in History*, chs. 1 and 2. For an analysis of historical revisionism see eds. Anita Shapira and Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right* (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), and especially Anita Shapira, "The Strategies of Historical Revisionism," 62-75. As for revisionism on the right, Shapira critiques mainly Yoram Hazony's work, which is in turn an attack on the New Historians' approach: Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

²¹ Recent examples of this scholarship are the works by David N. Myers, Noam Pianko, Joshua Karlip, Kenneth B. Moss, Kalman Weiser, James Loeffler, Dimitry Shumsky, Adam Rovner, David E. Fishman, Jeffrey Shandler, Stefan Vogt, Joshua Shanes, and Simon Rabinovitch. This scholarship is partly indebted to Jonathan Frankel's pioneering and by now classic work on socialism and the emergence of modern Jewish politics in Russia (and Poland): Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²² Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 15-7; Tara Zahra, "Emigration, Ethnic Cleansing, and East European Colonialisms," paper presented at the European University Institute, 15 May 2014.

²³ Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*, 3-4, 174, 43-4. On Kohn and Zionism, see also Dimitry Shumsky, "Brith Shalom's Uniqueness Reconsidered: Hans Kohn and Autonomist Zionism," *Jewish History* 25 (2011): 339-353. Joshua Shanes, in his recent study of Diaspora Nationalism in Habsburg Galicia, states that the lines between nationalists and assimilationists were not clearly drawn during the late nineteenth century and that assimilationism in most cases did not mean the complete dissolving of Jewish identity. However, he does imply that a stricter division was reached during the early twentieth century: Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 65.

behind them anathema to Zionism. Like Pianko's three protagonists, many Territorialists imagined the future Jewish cultural and political life to take shape in both Palestine and the Diaspora. The rapid growth of the Jewish population in Palestine as a result of the fourth and fifth *Aliyot* in the 1920s and 1930s made such a dual solution necessary. In fact, the Territorialists even added a third dimension to the Palestine/Diaspora bifurcation: a concentrated Jewish settlement outside both Europe and Palestine. Like the "counterstate" Zionist Simon Rawidowicz, Territorialism did not see the Diaspora as the "periphery", but only as a different, equally important geographical and spiritual location for Jewish life.²⁴

One contribution this project wishes to make is to show that there existed more transnational similarities than differences in thinking about Jewish nationality.²⁵ Scholarship about Jewish nationalism has asserted that its manifestations differed in different parts of the world, with the biggest contrast existing between the United States and Europe. Territorialism, a transatlantic and transnational movement, challenges this premise. It also problematises the clear dichotomy between Eastern and Western European Jewish history that guides so much of Jewish scholarship. This East/West framework will be further explored and challenged throughout the chapters that follow.

Despite his significant contribution to non-Zionist Jewish political history, Pianko does aim to afford his protagonists a place in Zionist historiography.²⁶ A similar tendency is discernable in the recent works of Jess Olson, Joshua Karlip and Joshua Shanes. Their main scholarly motivation seems to be less the recovery of fully independent alternative political narratives than a reassessment of the perimeters of Zionism and a reappraisal of "authentic" Diaspora life, which Zionist discourse has generally rejected and discarded.²⁷ In theory, such a definitional expansion could also serve to allow "my" Territorialists into this category.

However, with this study, I do not intend to win acknowledgement for Territorialists as Zionists. I subscribe to Joshua Shanes' holistic approach to the analysis of modern Jewish politics, but take issue with his subsequent claim that the scholarly understanding of Zionism should be expanded for it to form an umbrella under which

²⁴ Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*, 73, 189.

²⁵ Ibid., 22, 36-7.

²⁶ Ibid., 174, 7.

²⁷ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*; Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*; Jess Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish Modernity: Architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

other forms of Jewish political behaviour would fit.²⁸ Such a broader understanding does indeed help to include less obvious, heterodox forms of Zionism, as also Territorialism could be understood: the movement emerged directly out of Zionism and its earliest proponents even referred to themselves as the “real Zionists”. Very quickly, however, the Territorialist movement, especially in its Freeland League-incarnation, developed a self-standing ideology that existed outside the confines of Zionist thought. I therefore argue in favour of both ways of framing the Territorialists, as both alternative Zionist and as non-Zionist. Moreover, I hold that such a dual understanding does not constitute an irreconcilable contradiction, but in fact makes a valuable contribution to the study of Jewish politics. Rather than writing Territorialism into Zionist history, which offered the master narrative in which the Territorialists were understood for decades, I wish to present the history of Territorialism as an autonomous narrative, one that is not dependent on its relationship to Zionism to gain content and significance. Obviously, this history could and should be written with Zionist history as a point of reference, but it is even more important to write it as part of the broader narrative of Jewish political behaviour and twentieth century nationalism.

Scholarship and Territorialism

As yet, the history of Territorialism has remained underresearched. This does not mean that no work has been done: Territorialism has featured in the works of scholars of Jewish politics, and also in more general studies of modern nationalism. Anthony D. Smith, for instance, acknowledges the Uganda proposal’s importance in determining the post-1905 Zionist focus, as it led to “the inner world of Jewish myth and memory [to be] translated into collective political choices under the impact of external events”.²⁹

Most notably, scholars Gur Alroey and Adam Rovner have excavated important facts about Territorialism’s history. Alroey’s focus lies with the ITO’s history, whereas Rovner has dealt with the interwar Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation.³⁰ Naturally, in the following, I draw extensively on these works. That having been said, both studies mainly reconstruct a factual history of the Territorialist movement. More

²⁸ Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 285.

²⁹ Smith, “Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism,” 9.

³⁰ Gur Alroey, *Seeking a Homeland: The Jewish Territorial Organization (Ito) and Its Struggle with the Zionist Movement, 1905-1925* [in Hebrew] (The Ben Gurion University of the Negev, 2011); Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014). Both Alroey and Rovner have published several related articles. I draw upon these as well throughout this work. For a full list, I refer the reader to the bibliography.

importantly, neither author has endeavoured to offer a comprehensive analysis of the meaning of Territorialism and Territorialist ideology in relation to the broader currents of Jewish political history, still less to more general geopolitical trends. It is in these realms that the current study offers new insights, while gratefully relying on the existing scholarship.

Alroey's book forms an important source of information for chapter 2. Moreover, as the main interest of my work is the interwar and post-war Freeland League, the parallels with Rovner's work are easily drawn. Throughout the remainder of this study, the reader will find numerous references to Rovner's analysis, many elements of which I agree with, whereas I challenge others. Here, I will give a short introduction to the book's set-up, and my assessment of its general merits and limitations.

Rovner's is an exploration of what he considers six key examples of non-Zionist plans, or "lost causes" for Jewish settlement, all of which he terms "Territorialist". Except for Mordecai Noah's Ararat-scheme, all these plans were indeed proposed by the different incarnations of the Territorialist movement, first and foremost the Freeland League.³¹ The book's literary approach (it is organised as a chronological travelogue based on the author's own travel experiences), does not help to achieve one of Rovner's stated main aims, namely to trace the history of the Territorialist *idea*. Rovner does rely on an impressive amount of source (much of which also lies at the basis of the current study). This research allows him to touch upon many of the core aspects of Territorialist ideology. Nonetheless, his informative analysis does generally not move beyond merely mentioning these very interesting observations. Most importantly, Rovner's formulation of Territorialism's essence as "the tenaciously held idea of creating a territorial solution for Jewish homelessness *beyond* the biblical land of Israel" does not do justice to the movement's broader scope: as we will see, Zionism and Palestine, however important to Territorialist history, were not the starting and end point of the movement's story.³²

Setting the stage: Jewish politics' broader narrative

In order to situate Territorialism on the larger Jewish political spectrum we must first get a sense of what this political context looked like. Therefore, in this section I will sketch the contours of the diverse, non-Zionist ideological landscape of which Territorialism

³¹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 3-4.

³² *Ibid.*, 3, 10-11.

formed a part. For clarity's sake, I have grouped the wide range of existing parties and organisations into three main categories: "Diaspora Nationalism", "Bundism", and "Socialism and (Austro-)Marxism".

Historian Walter Laqueur does not consider Zionism to have been politically relevant before 1917. One of his "13 theses on Zionism" is: "Up to the Balfour Declaration Zionism's main function was cultural-psychological: it sustained the faith of its believers but was of no political importance."³³ However, when analysing the broader European Jewish political scene during the first decades of the twentieth century, an image arises of a diverse and scattered collection of smaller and bigger movements that were most definitely *politically* active, Zionism included.³⁴

Interestingly, a story written by none other than "father of Territorialism" Israel Zangwill is often quoted to illustrate this diversity of Eastern European Jewish politics before the Shoah.³⁵ In this 'Samooborona' ("self-defense" in Russian), he describes a small Jewish town in the Russian part of partitioned Poland, where political factionalism has reached such magnitude that agreement about the right course of action cannot be reached, even in the face of an imminent pogrom: individuals' attachment to their political denominations seems more important than coming to a workable cooperation for sheer survival's sake.³⁶

Without fully subscribing to this somewhat cynical view of a chaotic Jewish political scene, it can still be concluded that a strict dichotomy between Zionists on one end and Assimilationists³⁷ on the other paints too limited a picture. Renowned writers

³³ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 590.

³⁴ For a concise overview of interwar Jewish politics in Poland, see Keith Ian Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkists in Poland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), esp. ch. 5.

³⁵ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 3-4; Mateusz Zatoński, "Jewish Politics in the New Poland: The 1922 Elections, a Case Study," *SŁOVO* 24, no. 1 (2012): 19.

³⁶ Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena: The Career of Israel Zangwill* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 168-9.; Israel Zangwill, "Samooborona," in *Ghetto Comedies*, ed. Israel Zangwill (New York: Macmillan, 1907). This was exactly the kind of situation Hannah Arendt still observed in 1945 and which she saw as counterproductive to the future of Jews: Jerome Kohn, "Preface: A Jewish Life: 1906-1975," in *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), xxii-xxiii.

³⁷ Ezra Mendelsohn, Jonathan Frankel and Joshua Shanes (referring to Milton M. Gordon) have pointed out the limitations of the term "assimilation". Rather, they propose the use of "integrationism" (Mendelsohn) or "acculturation" (Frankel/Gordon): Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 16; Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews," 21; Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 10. Shanes observes that Zionist historiography has tended to classify all non-Zionist movements as "assimilationist". I believe there was also a normative and political reasoning behind this Zionist historiographical tendency, but Shanes explains the confusion by referring to the practice of nineteenth century Jews to label themselves as "assimilationist", even when they meant only integration into society as Jews. I use the term "assimilation" only to refer to those Jews who propagated partial or full assimilation into dominant society.

and intellectuals like Franz Kafka, Arnold Zweig, Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem were examples of European Jews who rejected total assimilation without becoming outright Jewish nationalists.³⁸ Other prominent thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Ahad Ha'Am, Hans Kohn, Martin Buber, and again Scholem, at least for some period, self-identified as Zionists, but they also cherished political ideas and ideals that differed from the Zionist mainstream.³⁹ Lastly, decisions by several important Zionists even show the existence of a pre-Territorialist history of active Zionist dissent. Already before the Territorialist departure from the Zionist movement in 1905, well-known individuals like Bernard Lazare and Nathan Birnbaum had left the movement out of discontent with the direction Zionism was taking.⁴⁰ Others did not leave Zionism forever, but changed allegiance for a while, such as economist Jacob Lestschinsky, co-founder of the Wilna-based cultural and educational centre YIVO. Lestschinsky had been part of a failed Jewish autonomy project in Ukraine directly following the First World War, and moved from socialist Zionism, to Territorialism, to Diaspora Nationalism and back to Zionism.⁴¹

The political contextual framework sketched in this section relies on several recent studies that deal with modern Jewish politics and is thus, like these studies, predominantly geographically focused on Central and Eastern Europe. It is important for our understanding of Territorialism, however, to remain aware of the fact that it was a product of both East and West. Illuminating is Paula Hyman's statement that both Eastern and Western European Jews were politically active, even if this happened in very different ways. In the West, Jews did not organise themselves as political parties, but were affiliated with existing non-Jewish ones. It could even be argued that Western Jews enjoyed less freedom in maintaining their standard of living if they organised themselves politically.⁴²

However, the difference between the two parts of the geographical divide may not have been that big in practice: like in the West, most Jews in Central and Eastern Europe were politically uninvolved. Those who did embrace some form of Jewish nationalism did so in very diverse ways. These different practices and interpretations were at the same

³⁸ Noah William Isenberg, *Between Redemption and Doom: The Strains of German-Jewish Modernism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 10, 114; Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 50-1.

³⁹ Jacqueline Rose, *The Question of Zion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 69.

⁴⁰ Feldman, "Introduction," 15.

⁴¹ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 125-6.

⁴² Paula E. Hyman, "Was There a 'Jewish Politics' in Western and Central Europe?," in *The Quest for Utopia. Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions through the Ages*, ed. Zvi Gitelman (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 106, 112-4.

time largely interconnected and mutually influential. Territorialists, Zionists, Bundists, Yiddishists, Autonomists, Folkists and Assimilationists may have occupied the same geographical space, but their histories have been generally written as separate narratives.⁴³ All these denominations relied on the same political discourse, which—with the possible exception of the radical assimilationists' use of it—focused on the preservation of Jewish life in the Diaspora as expressed through the Yiddish language and culture, a goal to which even Zionists contributed. (Only later, as the negation or outright rejection of exile became an important political tool for the Zionists, did they abandon their attachment to Diaspora life.)

Analysed within a wider historical context, the forging of Jewish national identities appears to be a modern development and not a primordial given, as Zionist historians have claimed it to be. The increasing political engagement was in line with broader political developments: society at large was politicising and nationalising. The turn to Zionism, or any other Jewish political colour, was thus a conscious one. At the same time, Shanes rightly argues, these identities were not created from nothing, or in other words: *imagined* in the way scholars of nationalism Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm would have it. Rather, they were modern identities, *constructed* on the basis of preexisting elements of Jewishness, or, to use Anthony Smith's term, "ethnies".⁴⁴

Diaspora Nationalism

If we rely on Smith's very broad definition of "Diaspora Nationalism", then thanks to these preexisting elements of Jewishness Zionism became "perhaps the most dramatic and vivid of the ethno-religious diaspora nationalisms". According to Smith, the centrality of the notion of an "ingathering of the exiles" points towards this crucial role of the Diaspora for Zionism.⁴⁵ By assigning to the Jewish Diaspora its rightful central place in Zionist thought, Smith argues, justice is done to the diverse reality of Jewish nationalism in general and of Zionism in particular. By combining both the intrinsic, ancient elements of Jewish history and the real millennia-long Jewish historical experience that followed it, a space is created in which mainstream Zionist, non-Zionist, and heterodox Zionist forms of nationalism can exist side by side. The exact meaning of Zionism (and, we may add,

⁴³ James Loeffler, "Between Zionism and Liberalism: Oscar Janowsky and Diaspora Nationalism in America," *AJS Review* 34, no. 2 (2010): 292; Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 312-3.

⁴⁴ Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 2, 6, 5 n.14.

⁴⁵ Smith, "Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism," 17.

Jewish political behaviour in general) can furthermore be illuminated by exploring the parallels that exist between the Jewish experience and other national ethno-religious diaspora groups, such as the Greeks and the Armenians.⁴⁶

This middle way between a primordial and a constructivist view on Jewish nationalist history is convincing, although the exact nature of the “building blocks” of modern Jewish national identity are not as fixed as for instance Shanes would have it. According to him, the modern nationalist consciousness was based on a “collective understanding of Jewish peoplehood, reinforced by liturgy and ritual, a shared historical connection to a specific territory, and a unique common language”.⁴⁷ Obviously, these elements do exist,⁴⁸ but they did not carry equal weight for all Jewish political denominations.⁴⁹ Territorialists, for instance, did not deny the spiritual meaning of Palestine, but it was not a central element that defined their Jewish national identity.

Zionism was thus not the sole actor on the terrain of Jewish national thought and behaviour. In fact, for the longest time, the Zionist movement was a minority party within world Jewry; the establishment of organised Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century coincided and perhaps even contributed to the development of other Jewish nationalist associations.⁵⁰ There was ample space for different ways of thinking about the national question, and these different ways together constituted the majority.⁵¹ These other options were not deviations from, or exceptions to the perceived “rule” of state-focused Zionism, but were perfectly viable and legitimate in their own right.⁵² Zionists themselves at times also acknowledged the importance of accommodating different strands of Jewish politics: in line with Smith’s typification of Zionism as “Diaspora

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15.

⁴⁷ Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 286.

⁴⁸ With the possible exception of the Jewish language, which was never ultimately determined, with Hebrew and Yiddish as the major contestants for the position of the number one tongue, but with other European languages also part of the language battle.

⁴⁹ This is not to say that there are no valid cultural and historical elements binding the Jewish people together, as Shlomo Sand claims. Sand suggests that Jewish peoplehood itself is invented and therefore illegitimate: Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London/New York: Verso, 2009). For an insightful critique of some of Sand’s work, especially the primordial, biological implications of it, see Derek J. Penslar, “Shlomo Sand’s the Invention of the Jewish People and the End of the New History,” *Israel Studies* 17, no. 2 (2012). Despite his work’s weaknesses, Sand’s analysis of what he terms the Zionist “ethnoterritorial mythos” pertaining to Palestine is not without grounds; a related notion informs parts of the current study: Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Land of Israel: From Holy Land to Homeland* (London/New York: Verso, 2012), 258.

⁵⁰ Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 193.

⁵¹ Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895-1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 3, 20; Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 1.

⁵² See also Cohen, *English Zionists*, xi-xii.

Nationalist", Austrian Zionists before the First World War took active issue with the more general rejection of Diaspora Nationalist activities.⁵³ In the Austro-Hungarian context, Diaspora Nationalism reflected not just an ideal, but a political reality.⁵⁴

However, in this study I subscribe to a more rigid definition of the category of non-Zionist Diaspora Nationalists as a particular movement that did encompass several organisations. The first wave of this Diaspora Nationalism was led by Simon Dubnow, Chaim Zhitlowsky (1865-1943) and I.L. Peretz (1852-1915). Dubnow's Autonomists, united in the so-called Folkspartey (formed in 1906 and reinstated in 1917) propagated a progressive form of nationalism, combining national rights for Jews in the countries they inhabited with a secular universalism. In the Habsburg Empire, before and during the First World War respectively, the so-called Jewish Club and the Austrian Jewish Congress were Jewish attempts at participation in local and national Habsburg politics.⁵⁵ Chaim Zhitlowsky's movement advocated a secular Yiddishism, binding all Jewish social classes together.⁵⁶

Diaspora Nationalists were not strictly anti-Zionist, anti-Territorialist, or anti-Yiddishist, as Ezra Mendelsohn has claimed them to be.⁵⁷ On the contrary, Zhitlowsky was later in life directly affiliated with the Territorialists; he even attended the Freeland League's first international conference in 1935. As we will see in chapter 3, there was ample overlap between Territorialism and Diaspora Nationalist movements. In a way, both even represented mutually encompassing umbrella concepts. Moreover, Mendelsohn himself acknowledges seemingly with some regret that interwar Jewish political reality was not exactly static, and showed unclear boundaries between different movements. People moved between factions, which sometimes sprung up and disappeared overnight.⁵⁸

As for the second wave of Diaspora Nationalism, Joshua Karlip's study, focusing on the political biography of three central figures in the movement, offers an outstanding

⁵³ Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, a.o. 192-6.

⁵⁴ For an analysis of Diaspora Nationalism in the Habsburg Empire, see Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things."

⁵⁵ Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 94. On Folkism and the Folkspartey in Poland during WWI and in the interwar period see also Weiser, *Jewish People*, esp. chs. 4 and 5.

⁵⁶ For more on Zhitlowsky's early merging of socialism and Jewish nationalism, as well as other aspects of his life and work, see Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 217, 258-287.

⁵⁷ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 136; Joshua Karlip, "At the Crossroads between War and Genocide: A Reassessment of Jewish Ideology in 1940," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (2005): 171; Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 20.

⁵⁸ 'Freeland Movement. League for Territorial Colonisation': Report of the first international conference at Hotel Russell London, 17-21 July 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1; Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 123.

overview of the complex nature of the Jewish political state of affairs during the interwar period. Like Noam Pianko's triptych, Karlip's triple biography of Elias Tcherikower, Yisroel Efroikin, and Zelig Kalmanovitch, constitutes another example of the much-needed recent scholarly trend to recover the history of modern Jewish political behaviour. Of special significance to the current study is the fact that Kalmanovitch, a central Diaspora Nationalist, turned to Territorialism later in life. This fact illustrates the complexity of drawing clear boundaries between the different political denominations that were active in this period. It also supports my premise of the equal status that Territorialism had in relation to other political movements.

The Territorialists cannot easily be framed as either Zionists or Diaspora Nationalists. They were in fact neither, without rejecting the aims and merits of both the Zionist and the Diaspora Nationalist projects. A deeper analysis of Territorialist ideology and activities challenges David Rechter's assertion that Diaspora Nationalism lay between Zionism on the one hand and Territorialism on the other:⁵⁹ It was rather Territorialism that constituted the middle way, drawing upon both the importance Zionism ascribed to an autonomous Jewish territory outside Europe, and the value of the European Diaspora communities that was propagated by the Diaspora Nationalists. Diversity was a key aim, not only referring to ethnic diversity in the Diaspora, allowing Jews to continue their lives there as equal citizens, but also in imagining and implementing a Jewish future: Zionism, Territorialism and Diaspora Nationalism could exist alongside and even in cooperation with one another. Like Pianko's protagonists, the Territorialists tried to influence the "philosophical orientation of modernity" by allowing more space for diversity and seeing this diversity as a means of progress.⁶⁰

Such progress could only be achieved if the focus of nationalist projects would be placed on a broadly defined civilisational approach, rather than on a narrow, romantically inspired, ethnic *Kultur*-conception of the nation.⁶¹ Dubnow preferred a universalist approach, in which each nation or individual would be equal and integrated, over cosmopolitanism, which propagated a system of strictly defined entities operating on a

⁵⁹ Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 108.

⁶⁰ Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*, 18. See also Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 137. ChaeRan Freeze asserts that political movements like the Bund often had immense influence on relationships between men and women, in this way also contributing to the project of modernity: ChaeRan Y. Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 2002), 23.

⁶¹ Pianko refers to Horace Kallen's distinction between two versions of nationalism, namely the Prussian *Kultur*-variant, which he deplored, and a British nationalism based on civilisational elements: Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*, 50-51. See also Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 42.

world stage.⁶² To him, this cosmopolitanism was merely a trait of assimilation. On the other hand, the Zionist assertion that Jews were perpetual aliens in Europe was also dangerous for the Jewish future.⁶³

Dubnow, an influential political actor himself, supported and shaped a historiographical approach in which the Jews were treated as a coherent nation, albeit one for which community rather than religion was a central concept. This nation would become one amongst many nations, instead of a state within a state. After all, the latter was a situation that was feared by host countries, a fear that would be used as an argument against the Territorialist proposals as well. Such an attitude went back to Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre's famous 1789 statement that Jews should be welcomed as individuals, but not as a nation. Dubnow, perhaps naively, dismissed Clermont-Tonnerre's earlier statement as irrelevant in the twentieth century as he claimed that it had become generally accepted that civil rights should include national rights as well.⁶⁴

Socialism and (Austro-)Marxism

Jewish politics were not isolated from the larger political context in which they developed. Most influential in this regard were socialist and Marxist ideologies, and their practical manifestations. Jonathan Frankel has argued that the historiographical trend in which Dubnow was such a crucial figure was very much in line with a broader approach to Jewish politics. The essentials of this approach, shaped by the Russian intellectual radicalism of the late Tsarist period, helped to envision a future based on secular nations. This interpretation was a move away from the more theological vision of Jewish history propagated by the previous "king" of Jewish historiography, Heinrich Graetz. This new secular thinking appealed to many twentieth century Jewish political denominations, Territorialism included.⁶⁵

Jewish political life around the turn of the century developed predominantly in an Eastern European context. Jews in Tsarist Russia felt abandoned by Russian liberalist ideas that still prevailed throughout much of the nineteenth century, partly as a result of the work of the Jewish Enlighteners. These disappointed Russian Jews now created an

⁶² Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*, 48-9.

⁶³ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 39, 28.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 36-37. Larry Ray deduces from Clermont-Tonnerre's statement an openly hostile attitude towards the idea of a "nation within a nation": Larry Ray, "A 'conscious pariah' – Jewishness and universality in Hannah Arendt's political philosophy," presentation on 14 July 2014 at the British Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Trinity College Dublin, 13-15 July 2014.

⁶⁵ Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews," 2.

autonomist definition of their place within the empire.⁶⁶ As an extension of this development, Karlip distinguishes a quick move from strict socialism to a more democratic form of nationalism. Still, socialist ideology played a crucial role despite its seeming incompatibility with nationalist demands. Striking is Karlip's observation that around 1905, a revolutionary year in Eastern European politics more generally speaking and in Jewish politics specifically—after all, the birth of Territorialism is one important example of the pivotal meaning of this year—the ideological starting point for Russian Jewry was socialism and not Zionism.⁶⁷ Even within Zionism, the socialists strove for Jewish autonomy in the Diaspora as a means of enabling class war. In 1906, the Russian Zionist Congress in Helsingfors (Helsinki) accepted into its political program the notion of *Gegenwartsarbeit*, or work in the present, in the Diaspora. This decision was largely influenced by the socialist-Zionist forces, as well as by the example set by the Diaspora Nationalists in Habsburg Galicia. The new official commitment to *Gegenwartsarbeit* ushered in the era of so-called “synthetic Zionism”.⁶⁸

Jewish socialist nationalism in Eastern Europe assumed many faces during its early years, and was sometimes moved by outside forces to merge on an organisational if not ideological level. The most important Jewish socialist parties were the Marxist-Zionist Poale Zion, founded in 1904, the non-Marxist SERP, or “Sejmists”, seeking a Jewish parliament, and the socialist-revolutionary SSRP or simply SS, striving for a territorial solution in the present. All of these parties had their own territorial ambitions: before it merged with the SS to form the so-called Fareynikte after the 1917 February Revolution, the SERP had already become increasingly invested in finding a territorial solution. It saw territorial concentration as an end goal and not as a means to rescue Jews.⁶⁹ These Sejmists envisioned a liberal rather than a socialist state, in which Jews would have full national autonomy.⁷⁰ The SS, headed by Nachman Syrkin, represented another early version of what could be termed Eastern European Territorialism. Even though the SS did

⁶⁶ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 99.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 26, 54. See also Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 134-170. A similar view of 1905 as a pivotal year in Jewish politics in Eastern Europe is held by both David Fishman and Kenneth Moss. Moss argues that despite the revolutionary developments of 1917, Jewish national-cultural developments in the Russian Empire started with the 1905 government relaxations towards Jews, which opened the way for larger-scale (Yiddish) cultural projects: David E. Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 38, 47; Kenneth B. Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 9. See also Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights*, ch. 3.

⁶⁸ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 27, 30-1; Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism*, 89; Rechter, “A Nationalism of Small Things,” 92.

⁶⁹ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 63, 65; Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, 74.

⁷⁰ Karlip, “At the Crossroads,” 172.

exist independently from the ITO, Zangwill's departure from the Zionist movement in 1905 had spurred Syrkin to do the same,⁷¹ and the SS and the ITO would maintain a close relationship afterwards.⁷² Already in 1908, an international Socialist-Territorialist convention was held in Cleveland, Ohio.⁷³ In the 1930s, Joseph Leftwich, one of the leaders of Territorialism's interwar "second wave", even contributed to Socialist-Territorialist publications.⁷⁴

Lastly, of important influence on the thought of several movements and individuals was Austro-Marxism, advocating cultural-national autonomy for minority peoples within the Austrian-Hungarian Empire as a state-preserving measure. Even though one of Austro-Marxism's central figures, Otto Bauer, was a Jew himself, it was first and foremost Bauer who excluded the Jewish people from the national autonomy concept. The Austro-Marxists considered assimilation of Jews inevitable and desirable. They rejected elements of Jewish culture and especially Yiddish as the language of the degenerated Eastern Jew.⁷⁵

Indeed, as Diaspora Nationalist Efraim Syrkin stated, Bauer and Karl Renner had formulated their political system for minorities who had a place to call their homeland and therefore did not need to formulate their future in explicitly territorial terms.⁷⁶ This "de-coupling" of nationality and territory served to make nationalism compatible with socialist theory, but it also excluded the modern Jewish political experience and ambitions, which, even if defined in Diaspora Nationalist terms, were inescapably connected to at least a spiritual homeland. Nonetheless, despite the fact that it was thus highly problematic from a Jewish political perspective, the Austro-Marxist model did offer ample inspiration for the different Jewish Diaspora Nationalist movements: Jewish

⁷¹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 81-2. For a concise exploration of Syrkin's work and thought see Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 288-328.

⁷² Leftwich corresponded with at least one of these Socialist-Territorialists: Several letters to David Lvovitch, (1937), CZA A330/13. See also Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1995), 336.

⁷³ 'Socialist Territorialists', *Kingston Daily Freeman* (8 May 1908), available at <http://news.hrvh.org/cgi-bin/newshrvh?a=d&d=kingstondaily19080508.2.15&e=-----20--1-----all> (retrieved 29 May 2012).

⁷⁴ Edith Zangwill to Leftwich, 5 February 1937, CZA A330/13.

⁷⁵ Karl Renner and others, most notably Poale Zion-co-founder Max Rosenfeld, still to a certain extent left open the option of Jews constituting a national group with territorial rights and demands: Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 89, 106; Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York/London: Routledge, 1991), 82. For a more general overview of the history of Austro-Marxism see Raimund Loew, "The Politics of Austro-Marxism," *New Left Review* I, no. 118 (1979); Norbert Leser, "Austro-Marxism: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, no. 2/3 (1976); Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode, *Austro-Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), esp. the Introduction.

⁷⁶ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 255.

political thinkers such as Simon Dubnow drew upon the Austro-Marxist example for inspiration for their non-territorial version of Jewish nationalism.⁷⁷

*Bundism*⁷⁸

The different strands of Jewish Diaspora Nationalism and Zionism were not necessarily on the best terms with the other important Jewish political force of the time: the Marxist-inspired Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poyln un Rusland, generally referred to as the Bund. Tcherikower typified Bundists as “kings without a people, but [who] imagine that a parade is following them”. He deplored their “class”-approach and therefore their inability to consider all Jews a unified nation.⁷⁹ Bundism was indeed rooted in Marxist thought and had therefore trouble reconciling itself with the concept of a worldwide Jewish unity. Nonetheless, in Central and Eastern Europe the Bund was arguably the strongest Jewish political force between the wars, and did develop into a Yiddish-focused national party, despite its earlier denunciation of cultural work.⁸⁰

Thanks to these developments, central Bundists like Vladimir Medem (1879-1923) did see the Jews in national terms, but organised in local structures. In a secularised world Jews around the globe had very little in common, Medem asserted. The commonality that did exist was not formed by a shared everyday culture or language, but could be best summarised with the term “Kulturgemeinschaft”, incorporating the concept of a communal historical destiny. Medem did not cherish any messianic convictions, but acknowledged that what united Jews was their shared idea of chosenness and

⁷⁷ Rechter, “A Nationalism of Small Things,” 88-9, 91; Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness* (New York/Jerusalem: St. Martin's Press/Magnes Press, 1987), 178. Several scholars have recently traced the intellectual connection between Dubnow and Austro-Marxism. For a short list of these works see Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights*, 298-9, n.57.

⁷⁸ As the political nature of Bundism is essentially different from the ideologies and movements here mentioned and discussed, the space allotted to the Bund and its historiography is limited in this introductory analysis. Naturally, the historical links between Bundism and Territorialism, which did exist, will be touched upon in the following chapters. For a thorough overview of the early ideology of the Bund, see Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 171-257. For a more recent study of the relationship between the Bund and Polish socialism see Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality: The Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892-1914* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004). Polish-Jewish (political) history is currently a burgeoning field. Some of the “standard” works are Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); Antony Polonsky and Norman Davies, *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939-46* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia* (Oxford/Portland: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010); as well as the by now 16 issues of *Polin, Studies in Polish Jewry*, edited by Antony Polonsky and published by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

⁷⁹ Quoted in: Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 43, 139.

⁸⁰ Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, 73.

redemption. This did not have religious implications, but it did constitute the rationale for the Bundist focus on Jewish minority rights. In this light, Medem could not support either Territorialism or Zionism, because neither focused on a Jewish future within Europe.⁸¹

Political participation amongst Polish Jews was relatively high, which meant that many of them, especially those in the younger age categories, were somehow already involved when Territorialism entered the stage, mostly with either the Bund or with the Zionists.⁸² This limited amount of as of yet “unclaimed” Jews posed clear challenges for the Territorialists, who had to find their own space in a crowded political landscape. The Bund’s success in Poland showed that there were political options. Undoubtedly with this in mind, an unidentified individual wrote to Zangwill in 1925, encouraging him to take up an invitation to come to Poland, despite the fact that this would potentially infuriate the Zionists.⁸³ And indeed, as we will further explore in Chapter 3, before the outbreak of war in 1939 brutally disrupted and largely ended Jewish life in Poland, the Territorialists seemed to be increasingly successful in attaining a position within Polish-Jewish politics.⁸⁴ The Shoah ended this brief period of potential Territorialist success and led to the Freeland League’s post-war transatlantic move and newly constructed network.

In the following chapter, I will acquaint the reader with the “essentials” of the Territorialists’ plans and ideology. I will also introduce the six main themes that provide the analytical structure for the empirical, chronological chapters that follow.

⁸¹ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 106, 108-9, 11-13, 119-20, 123.

⁸² Lecture Emanuel Pat, 3 April 1944, YIVO RG366/158.

⁸³ Unidentified individual to Zangwill, 20 April 1925, CZA A330/153

⁸⁴ Steinberg to Edith Zangwill, 10 June 1938, YIVO RG366/483.

Chapter 1: Territorialism, an Introduction

Zangwill and his fellow-Territorialists chose a name for their movement that left ample space for interpretation, both for the historical actors themselves and for the historian of Jewish nationalism.¹ The term “territorialism”, even when applied to a specifically Jewish context, has been used in relation to several aspects of Jewish political behaviour dating back to long before the creation of the Zionist movement. These uses of “territorialism” do not refer to the Jewish Territorialists under consideration here. After 1897, Zionism became increasingly territorially focused and early Zionists used the term to describe the nature of their movement. It is therefore understandable that even recent scholars have mistakenly used the word in connection to movements that had nothing to do with actual Territorialism.² However, ever since the Zangwill-headed secession from the Zionist Movement in 1905, “Territorialism” can really only refer to the ITO and its sympathisers and later incarnations, first and foremost the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation.

In this study, I focus on members of “Zangwillian” Territorialist organisations and on those who openly affiliated themselves with these movements. Similar ideas were voiced in other Jewish circles; the similarities between for instance Diaspora Nationalists and some members of the Freeland League grew smaller from the 1930s onwards. Indeed, the Territorialists became increasingly interested in a more cultural or explicitly Yiddishist interpretation of the meaning of Territorialism. Therefore, even though my analysis focuses on those organisations and individuals that explicitly identified with Zangwill’s legacy, the undeniable interactions and even crossovers between Territorialists and other Jewish cultural-political entities form part of the story here told.

The current chapter sets out to explain the content and meaning of Territorialist ideology. Admittedly, Territorialism in 1905 differed significantly from Territorialism in 1950, due to the different historical contexts in which it existed.³ Nevertheless, the essentials remained the same over time. It is with these essentials that this section is concerned. The main objective of the Territorialists was “to procure a territory upon an

¹ For example, Simon Rabinovitch uses the word “territorialists” when referring to Zionists: Simon Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), xxiii.

² Joshua Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013), 63, 65; Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 20.

³ Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 222.

autonomous basis for those Jews who cannot or will not remain in the lands in which they at present live.”⁴ In contrast to the Zionists, the ITO and the Freeland League thus did not aim at bringing together all Jews, but only those who wanted or were forced to leave their present countries.

The second part of the chapter will introduce six main themes that reflect the most important features of Territorialist history. These themes together form the thematic skeleton necessary to understand the movement’s meaning and significance and they will therefore constitute the red threads for the rest of this study. These six main themes can be grouped into two categories. The first will help to situate Territorialism within a broader history of Jewish political behaviour by looking at the relationship between Jewish culture and politics (and culture *as* politics), between religion and the concept of modernity, and at the way Territorialists valued and addressed the Jewish Diaspora. The second category contains themes that help to understand Territorialism’s connection to larger geopolitical debates: space and science, colonialism, and the relationship between Territorialism and Zionism. These themes help to demonstrate the novelty of the current study by “freeing” Territorialism from the strict confines of its traditional Zionist explanatory framework, and by analysing it as part of a broader Jewish political as well as a non-Jewish political narrative.

Territorialism: the essentials

Pre-History

The toying with the idea of finding other locations than Palestine for Jewish settlement did not commence overnight with the Uganda offer. In 1954, former Territorialist Joseph Leftwich dated the basic tenets underlying the movement’s ideology as far back as biblical times.⁵ Actual settlement plans started surfacing somewhat later in history. In 1656, in his utopian *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, dedicated to Oliver Cromwell, James Harrington suggested to grant Ireland (“Panopea”) to the Jews.⁶ During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ideas were developed for Jewish settlements in Asia

⁴ Central Russian Directorate, ‘Constitution of the ITO’, [no date], CZA A120/60, p. 2; ITO-Leaflet no. 1: ‘What is the ITO?’, [no date], CZA A36/8.

⁵ Joseph Leftwich, ‘Looking Back On Territorialism’, *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954) 2-4: 3.

⁶ Larry Ray, “A ‘conscious pariah’”; James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana, and, a System of Politics*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 6.

Minor and the United States.⁷

In the 1820s, the American Jew Mordecai Noah proposed to create his Jewish settlement “Ararat” on Grand Island, close to Buffalo, New York. He managed to purchase tracts of land, but the settlement never came about due to a lack of Jewish interest. After Noah’s failed endeavour, he was claimed as both a proto-Zionist and as a Territorialist. This is less contradictory than it seems, as until 1903, when the Zionist movement became solely focused on Palestine, Zionism and Territorialism were in fact one and the same thing. Herzl and Zangwill, labouring side by side, personified this convergence of Jewish “isms”.⁸

After Ararat, the 1840s saw the establishment of the Kherson settlements in the Crimea.⁹ Moisés Ville in Argentina was founded in 1889 and a Jewish settlement in Woodbine, New Jersey followed two years later. Both initiatives were created based on the ideas and support of Baron Maurice de Hirsch, a wealthy philanthropist best known for his (non-political) Jewish settlement project in Argentina through his Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA). Even after organised Territorialism became a fact, non-Palestinian Jewish settlement was not the exclusive domain of the new movement. The most famous twentieth century Jewish settlement project was the Jewish Autonomous Oblast or Region in Birobidzhan, Siberia, initiated by Stalin in the 1920s. Lesser known, but in fact of larger scale, were the second Crimean settlements. During the 1920s, with the Crimea reaching autonomous status, many Ukrainian Jews were moved there.¹⁰

In his famous pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation* (1882), proto-Zionist and *Hovevei Zion* (Lovers of Zion)-leader Leon Pinsker had propagated the emigration of Jews to one clearly defined territory.¹¹ Pinsker philosophised about a region in the U.S. or in the Ottoman Empire, and for this reason Zangwill saw Pinsker as the first Territorialist.¹² T.B.

⁷ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 44-5.

⁸ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 42-3. For more about Noah’s scheme, see the relevant chapter in Rovner’s book: “Noah’s Ark on the Niagara,” 15-43.

⁹ Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: “Ritual Murder,” Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 405, n.14.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Shandler, *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language & Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 37-8. On Birobidzhan see Robert Weinberg, *Stalin’s Forgotten Zion: Birobidzhan and the Making of a Soviet Jewish Homeland: An Illustrated History, 1928-1996* (Berkeley: University of California Press/Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1998), especially the selected bibliography: 97-8.

¹¹ Vasos I. Vlavianos and Feliks Gross, *Struggle for Tomorrow: Modern Political Ideologies of the Jewish People* (New York: Arts, Incorporated, 1954), 113; Maurice Wohlgeleer, *Israel Zangwill: A Study* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 139; Alex Bein, *Theodor Herzl: Biographie* (Vienna: Fiba-verlag, 1934), 175.

¹² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 83. Alroey expands on this point of seeing Pinsker as a Territorialist founding father: Gur Alroey, “Mesopotamia – ‘The Promised Land’: The Jewish Territorial Organization

Herwald, one of the central British Territorialists in both the ITO- and the Freeland League-era, referred to himself as “one of the masses, whose territorialism and activity begins with Dr. Pinsker[']s [A]uto-[E]mancipation”.¹³ Indeed, as Walter Laqueur phrases it: “When [Pinsker] wrote his pamphlet he was a territorialist, not a Zionist.”¹⁴ Nor did Zangwill only begin to think along Territorialist lines once the Uganda option arose. He had been writing about Jewish affairs ever since the 1880s and described his vision of a “portable Palestine” in his essay ‘The Ghetto’ in the early 1890s: if Israel could not live in Palestine, then Palestine would just have to live on in Israel, or in other words: in the Jewish nation, wherever it would settle.¹⁵

Diaspora

In 1956, the anti-Zionist American-Jewish journalist William Zuckerman wrote about Freeland League-leader Isaac Steinberg and his recently deceased daughter Ada that both of them had shared a “love for the Jewish *people* (as distinct from the Jewish state, or the abstract Jewish *nation*)”.¹⁶ This sentence touches on the core of Territorialism’s connection to the Jewish Diaspora. An article, written by Zangwill in 1919, and reprinted in the Freeland League periodical *Freeland* in 1945 (showing its continued relevance), also dealt with the engaged Territorialist stance towards the Diaspora: like its two first “apostles” Leon Pinsker and Theodor Herzl, Territorialism saw the “external menace of antisemitism and the internal menace of de-Judaisation” as the two biggest dangers to Jews and Judaism. Pinsker and Herzl had erred only in their belief that the Jewish state should supplant the Diaspora. Subsequently, they and their followers had mistakenly believed that “the Ghettoes of the world were transported across space to the chosen land as by some magic carpet of the Arabian nights”.¹⁷ By contrast, Territorialism affirmed

Project in the *Bilād Al-Rāfidayn* and the Question of Palestine, 1899-1917”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 6 (2014): 912-3.

¹³ T.B. Herwald to the President and Council of the ITO, 29 October 1913, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁴ Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 74. Dimitry Shumsky further develops this statement by arguing that for Pinsker territorial nationalism was not only unconnected to Palestine, but it was also a means to ameliorate Jewish life in the Diaspora, rather than merely an end goal in itself: Dimitry Shumsky, “Leon Pinsker and “Autoemancipation!”: A Reevaluation,” *Jewish Social Studies* 18, no. 1 (2011): 33-62.

¹⁵ Israel Zangwill, “The Ghetto” [1899], 3 and Israel Zangwill, “Zionism” [October 1899], 165, both in *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, ed. Maurice Simon (London: The Soncino press, 1937); Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: The Life and Works of Israel Zangwill* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 76-8, 114-15, 31-2.

¹⁶ William Zu[c]kerman (ed.), *Jewish Newsletter. Independent thinking on Jewish problems* XII, no. 23 (26 November 1956), YIVO RG682/682.

¹⁷ Zangwill, ‘A Territorial Solution of The Jewish Problem’, (reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, April 1919) *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945) 11-13: 11.

"Jewish nationhood in the Diaspora, but accept[ed] political Zionism's fundamental belief in the need for an independent political territory."¹⁸

Since the basic tenets and the founding fathers of Zionism and Territorialism were the same, the latter in fact started out as a heterodox version of the former. Rovner's claim that humanitarian concerns lay at the basis of the Territorialist secession is not incorrect, but too limited:¹⁹ Territorialism also differed from Zionism in concluding that the birth of modern Jewish nationalist behaviour had "reanimated" the Diaspora, rather than spelling its end. Territorialism thus did not aim at curing this diasporic Judaism, but at seizing the opportunity to recreate it anew, both in Europe and in a Territorialist settlement.²⁰

Ideals and pragmatism

To a certain extent, Territorialism grappled with the same tensions as other non-Zionist Jewish political denominations. Territorialists too wavered between socialism and nationalism, radicalism and traditionalism, opposition to and cooperation with Zionism, Yiddishism and anti-Yiddishism, realism and utopianism.²¹ Rovner observes a development from an imperial and bourgeois ITO to the socialist-revolutionary underpinnings of the Freeland League. However, Rovner's analysis stresses the material basis of the movement's ideology. Similarly, Shmuel Almog identifies as one of the "hallmarks" of Territorialist ideology its aim to liberate the Jews from "the binds of religion and history".²² Both Almog and Rovner seem to overlook the religiously inspired and Yiddishist elements that were just as much part of Territorialist ideology.

Territorialism thus represented many, at times contradictory, ideas and convictions. Jonathan Frankel correctly claims that Territorialism did not produce one coherent ideology, even less so than Zionism, which also harboured several strands of thinking. Frankel explains Territorialism's relative success in both Eastern and Western Europe, rather than only in the East, by observing that the movement's ambitions were based on pragmatic and philanthropic reasoning. This way of thinking was acceptable to

¹⁸ Joshua Shanes, "Yiddish and Jewish Diaspora Nationalism," *Monatshefte* 90, no. 2 (1998): 178.

¹⁹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 221-2.

²⁰ Zangwill, 'A Territorial Solution of The Jewish Problem', (reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, April 1919) *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945) 11-13: 12.

²¹ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 11.

²² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 10; Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness* (New York/Jerusalem: St. Martin's Press/Magnes Press, 1987), 302.

Jews on both sides of the East/West divide. Zangwill even explicitly rejected the notion of a fixed political ideology.²³

According to Zangwill, nationalism as such was ideologically useless. Territorialism needed practical goals and methods, while at the same time setting a moral example to the rest of the world. For Zangwill, “nationality [was] formed by the decision to form a nationality”.²⁴ Like the Habsburg Jewish autonomist Hermann Kadisch (1861-1934), he saw the nation as nothing more than an “intermediary between the individual and humanity”.²⁵ Zangwill noted a certain tension created by the Jews’ double identity as Jewish nationalists and as citizens of their countries. Also, he found it hypocritical to wish for an exclusively Jewish state—therewith reducing non-Jews to an ethnic minority at best—while Jews themselves were being singled out and discriminated against because of their minority status.²⁶

Zangwill believed that first a solution for the Jewish refugees was needed, and that only afterwards Palestine could be considered as a next step.²⁷ The Zionist approach lacked a sense of practical realism: “the Jews never showed themselves so completely *Luftmenschen* as when they resolved to be at last terrestrial and territorial”.²⁸ The Territorialists saw the limited and gradual growth of the Jewish population of Palestine as a process that could endanger the Jews involved.²⁹ Therefore, in a Territorialist settlement it was the priority to gather as many Jews as possible together at once. More than just the land was needed to make its inhabitants holy. In other words: to elevate the Jews to the status of a fully developed and coherent people it was more important that they be together in large numbers in a safe environment than for only some of them to be on a specific stretch of land, namely Palestine.³⁰ This conviction was the rationale behind

²³ Jonathan Frankel, “Modern Jewish Politics East and West (1840-1939). Utopia, Myth, Reality,” in *The Quest for Utopia. Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions through the Ages*, ed. Zvi Gitelman (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 97. David Glover, “Imperial Zion: Israel Zangwill and the English Origins of Territorialism,” in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 138-9.

²⁴ Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill*, 22; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 204; Frankel, “Modern Jewish Politics,” 97.

²⁵ David Rechter, “A Nationalism of Small Things: Jewish Autonomy in Late Habsburg Austria,” *Leo Baeck Year Book* 52(2007): 99.

²⁶ Zangwill to Central Russian Directorate, [1906], CZA A120/60, p. 5.

²⁷ Glover, “Imperial Zion,” 139.

²⁸ Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 266.

²⁹ Meri-Jane Rochelson, “Zionism, Territorialism, Race, and Nation in the Thought and Politics of Israel Zangwill,” in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 145.

³⁰ Israel Zangwill, *The East African Question. Zionism and England's Offer* (New York: The Maccabean Publishing Company, 1904), 34.

Zangwill's famous statement that it was "better [to have] Zionism without Zion than Zion without Zionism".³¹

Territorialism was not, as both Rovner and Almog assert, mainly a humanitarian or philanthropic endeavour.³² Practicality and ideals went hand in hand: it was through a practical approach that Jewish ideas would be salvaged. "Second Wave" Territorialist Leftwich believed that a Jew was a Jew because of his Judaism and not because of his race and nationality. This first and foremost religiously defined Judaism offered enough grounds on which to justify the creation of a Jewish majority somewhere or even the founding of a state.³³ To convince third parties of the practicality of this aim, the Territorialists needed to show that a linkage between their ambitions and the interests of existing states would be beneficial to both sides involved. They thus practiced what in Jewish history is known as *shtadlanut* (representation of the Jewish community before the non-Jewish authorities).³⁴

Autonomy and non-partisanship

To render such a diplomatic approach most successful, it was important that the Territorialists clearly defined who they were and what they stood for. More so than the ITO before them, the Freelanders stressed the fact that their movement was to be of a non-political nature, free of partisanship. A propaganda leaflet from the early 1940s explicitly stated that the Freeland League was not a political party, but a "voluntary association", striving to find a place to create an "autonomous national life" for Jews, defined in cultural terms.³⁵ The future immigrants would become citizens of the countries in which the settlements were to be located. This was in line with what the Territorialists perceived to be the true essence of Jewish national and cultural activity. As one female Freeland member wrote to two of her colleagues in 1944: "It's the sort of non-political, more or less national group, which all of us, who have been brought up in the Jewish environment, would find closest to our hearts."³⁶ Still, for propaganda purposes it was

³¹ Hani A. Faris, "Israel Zangwill's Challenge to Zionism," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, no. 3 (1975): 88-9.

³² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 4; Almog, *Zionism and History*, 303.

³³ Speech Leftwich at rebirth ITO on 14 February 1943 at Royal Hotel, CZA A330/13, pp. 4, 13.

³⁴ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 22. Yigal Schwartz argues that Herzl himself had a very similar approach, aspiring to a certain amount of cosmopolitanism and attaching great value to political elites: Yigal Schwartz, "'Human Engineering' and Shaping Space in the New Hebrew Culture," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 3 (2005): 109.

³⁵ 'Aims and purposes of the Freiland League', [1943], YIVO RG554, Box 1.

³⁶ Mimi Mendelsberg to Esther Brakharsh and Eva Salomon, 19 January 1944, YIVO RG366/158.

also important to show the compatibility of Territorialism and the Zionist project. Therefore, the “non-partisan” Territorialist scheme was presented as an addition to Palestine.³⁷

However, especially during the Freeland-era, not all Territorialists agreed upon this sacrificing of political character and zeal for the sake of practicality. Lesser Fruchtbaum, one of the central figures within the post-war New York-based Freeland League, referred to the movement’s foremost periodical *Freeland* as a “party organ” that should not “claim to act as a free forum & be concerned with all the problems of Jewish life”.³⁸ During a meeting of the Political Commission of the Freeland League in New York in 1943, several speakers stressed the importance of political autonomy for the prospected Territorialist settlement. One of them, the French Territorialist Morris Feinleib, declared that if the Freeland League were to be only about settling people he would rather become a Zionist.³⁹

For Zangwill, a certain amount of autonomy was unavoidable. The Jewish territory would be of no use if Jews would not be completely free to keep their own habits.⁴⁰ Despite the ambition to be more than just an immigration association, the demand for autonomy and the Jewish nature of the future place of settlement were not entirely conclusive: “The expression ‘autonomous basis’ means and implies that the territory shall be one in which autonomy shall be *attainable* [italics are mine], and in which the predominant majority of the population shall be Jewish.” In 1906, Zangwill, addressing the Glasgow branch of the ITO, stressed that “[w]e do not make a feti[s]h of our phrase, ‘autonomous basis.’” Jewish politics, he asserted, could be created without it.⁴¹ A successful non-autonomous colony could in the long run even take away all anti-Semitic opposition to Jewish settlement.⁴² In 1936, Leftwich wrote that for Zangwill autonomy’s

³⁷ Steinberg to Judge Joseph M. Proskauer (president of the American Jewish Committee), 23 February 1945, YIVO RG366/73.

³⁸ Lesser Fruchtbaum to Steinberg, 27 April 1941, YIVO RG366/239A.

³⁹ ‘Protocol Meeting of the Political Commission of the Freeland League’, 18 May 1943, YIVO RG366/516.

⁴⁰ Zangwill to Rothschild, 7 April 1906, CZA A120/60, pp. 16-17. Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 102, 110.

⁴¹ ITO Leaflet no. 4, [no date], CZA A36/8.

⁴² ‘Canada. Report to the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organisation’, [1906-7], CZA A36/8, pp. 6-7. It should be added, however, that the “autonomous basis” instead of “autonomy”-clause was added under pressure of the American Territorialists: “So much for making perfect constitutions” Zangwill wrote to the Central Russian Directorate in 1906, “I had either to throw over the American Jews—the most powerful body in the world—or to accept their terms. [...] [O]ne has to choose either paper perfection or success, and I at least shall always choose success.”: Zangwill to The Central Russian Directorate, [April 1906], CZA A120/60, pp. 3-4.

main purpose had been solely to create a continuity of immigration. The colony would be politically Jewish merely by the fact that its inhabitants were Jewish.⁴³

Steinberg cherished strong beliefs in an active investment in the unity of both the Jewish people and the Jewish individual, rather than in political autonomy.⁴⁴ He even felt that a rigid political stance would not be conducive to the Territorialist ambitions. After all, most potential host countries still expressed their fear that the Jews would set up an “imperium in imperio”, or state within a state, something no government would welcome.⁴⁵ Moreover, prominent supporters, like German author Thomas Mann, favoured Territorialism precisely because of its apolitical character.⁴⁶ As famous violinist Yehudi Menuhin wrote to the Freeland League in 1940: “Especially encouraging is the lack of all political and historic associations. Freedom, freedom rings from every angle.”⁴⁷ Also from a religious and moral point of view, Steinberg believed that Jewish statehood was undesirable: “It would be a tragic irony of our history if the Jewish people after generations of experience would transplant the same tribal state life into Palestine, the very place where the prophets of Israel warned us against the dangers and crimes of tribes and states.”⁴⁸

According to Steinberg, it was the opposition from the Zionists that forced the Freeland League to take a strong, if not political position, in order not to be “trampled down” by its opponents.⁴⁹ Still, he declared that the focus should be on cultural autonomy and on the building up of a cooperative economy.⁵⁰ For Steinberg, there was a clear difference between state sovereignty and national autonomy, the first of which he rejected as “state fanaticism which is characteristic for Zionists”, and the second of which he interpreted in a cultural way and therefore embraced.⁵¹ Moreover, by taking on an explicitly a-political identity, the Freeland League differentiated itself from other Jewish national movements, and at the same time underlined the fact, stressed time and again,

⁴³ Joseph Leftwich, *What Will Happen to the Jews?* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1936), 200-1.

⁴⁴ “The place of Freeland with Jewish Life”, address to the Second Freeland Conference, NYC, October 1948, YIVO RG682/566.

⁴⁵ Steinberg to Kreine Alexander, 7 March 1943, YIVO RG366/651.

⁴⁶ Thomas Mann to Steinberg, 18 September 1945, YIVO RG366/299; also published in: *Freeland* 2, no. 1 (February 1946): 19. See also Thomas Mann, ‘I believe in Freeland’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 8.

⁴⁷ ‘Documents that Live’, *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 16.

⁴⁸ Steinberg, reply to article [Joseph] Steigrad, ‘Is Palestine the only solution for the Jewish problem?’, [1943], YIVO RG366/519.

⁴⁹ Steinberg to Waley Cohen, 30 June 1944, YIVO RG366/210.

⁵⁰ ‘The place of Freeland with Jewish Life’, address to the Second Freeland Conference, NYC, October 1948, YIVO RG682/566; Steinberg, ‘The Jubilee Of An Idea’, *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 2-3.

⁵¹ Steinberg to Ben-Adir [Avrom Rosin], 30 March 1942, YIVO RG394, Box 2.

that Territorialism did not aim at finding a substitute for Palestine, but at creating a necessary addition to it.⁵²

Concentrated settlement

Autonomy became a contested concept between Territorialists from the different European countries during the Freeland era,⁵³ but what practically all Territorialists did agree upon was the need for a concentrated settlement. After all, the idea was not just to save individual Jews, but also to salvage Jewish culture and tradition. Accepting multiple smaller territories was therefore out of the question. Even Palestine could be seen as counter-productive in this sense, as it offered only a partial solution and therefore divided rather than united Jewish communities.⁵⁴

To achieve their aims, the Territorialist leaders believed that large-scale immigration was the only way forward, even if the prospected settlement would remain without autonomy.⁵⁵ The problem was that (colonial) governments, when interested in cooperating with the Freeland League, generally preferred a policy of slow immigration infiltration. For the preservation and continuation of the Jewish people and tradition, however, the Territorialists deemed it to be of the utmost importance to settle Jews together, preferably in one closed, concentrated place, but if reality dictated it so in a limited amount of places.⁵⁶

This point of view led to disagreements with other Jewish organisations dealing with Jewish refugees. Like Herzl, Zangwill was particularly critical of the activities of the wealthy, but apolitical Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA) that dedicated itself to the buying of land for Jewish settlement across the globe. The Association did “not understand that a colony which attracts of itself has infinitely more chance than a colony to which people are philanthropically deported”.⁵⁷ Officially, Zangwill investigated

⁵² Steinberg, ‘Freeland is no Substitute’, 1943, YIVO RG366/519.

⁵³ Zoltan Schönberger to Joseph Leftwich, 19 November 1937 and 30 November 1937, CZA A330/14.

⁵⁴ Oskar Goldberg to Abraham Kin, 7 April 1943, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

⁵⁵ Leftwich to Israel I. Mattuck, 18 February 1937, CZA A330/581.

⁵⁶ Ada Siegel to Waley Cohen, 19 February 1940, YIVO RG366/405; Steinberg to Arthur Creech Jones, 9 November 1938, YIVO RG366/426; Steinberg to Seligman, 1 November 1938, YIVO RG366/468; Steinberg to Kreine Alexander, 7 March 1943, YIVO RG366/651; Draft letter Steinberg to Harris M. Lazarus, 22 August 1938, YIVO RG682/300; Arthur Sulzberger to Steinberg, 16 December 1944, YIVO RG366/349; T.B. Herwald to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Morning Post*, [June 1938], YIVO RG255, Box 2; Isaac N. Steinberg, ‘Where Are the Jews to Go? The Immigration Problem, Empty Spaces in the British Empire, the New Territorialism’, *The Jewish Chronicle* (1937); reprinted in Willy Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg in London Und New York*, vol. 40, Russica Palatina (Heidelberg: 2002), 31-2.

⁵⁷ Zangwill, *The East African Question*, 44; Herzl to Zangwill, 4 May 1903, CZA A120/681.

options for cooperation with organisations like the ICA.⁵⁸ Unofficially, on a letter he received from S. Ginsburg of the Swiss ITO branch, he scribbled “useless” next to an inquiry which important Jewish organisations should be invited to a planned ITO conference.⁵⁹

Three decades later, the British Zionist Norman Bentwich,⁶⁰ connected to the Council for German Jewry and active in Palestine on behalf of the Zionist movement, supported Jewish settlement in existing communities. He opposed the Territorialist ideal since he believed immigration infiltration and not closed settlement would lead to faster results with the interested governments.⁶¹ Bentwich, although critical of the Territorialist activities,⁶² was not an outright opponent or outsider to the Territorialist movement. He corresponded with British Territorialists like Myer Nathan and was engaged in a decade-long personal and professional correspondence with Leftwich, who in 1936 even named Bentwich as an indirect supporter of the Freeland cause.⁶³

The Territorialist attachment to the principle of concentrated settlement would come to form one of the most problematic demands to potential host governments.

Where?

Even though not all Territorialists denied the sacred status of Palestine, in Territorialist ideology, this concept had no place.⁶⁴ The Territorialists believed no country in the world had its original population. To assert that it did “would render all mankind homeless”.⁶⁵ Moreover, the prophetic elements later Zionists added to the Zionist programme were largely absent in Territorialism. In fact, Herzl himself had strongly opposed including

⁵⁸ Zangwill to Rothschild, 1 November 1912, CZA A120/69, pp. 20-22; ‘Canada. Report to the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organisation’, [1906/7], CZA A36/8, p. 5; Alroey, “Mesopotamia,” 921, 923.

⁵⁹ Ginsburg to Zangwill, 28 July 1914, CZA A36/3.

⁶⁰ For a short biographical account of Bentwich’ life and career, see Sarah Abrevaya Stein, “Protected Persons? The Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora, the British State, and the Persistence of Empire,” *American Historical Review* (February 2011): 96, n.45.

⁶¹ Council for German Jewry to Myer Nathan, 3 February 1938, YIVO RG366/485; Norman Bentwich (Council for German Jewry) to Nathan, 16 February 1938, YIVO RG366/485; ‘JTA Bulletin’, 30 November 1938, YIVO RG366/485; Steinberg to Seligman, 30 November 1938, YIVO RG366/468.

⁶² A. Patkin (general manager of Orient Lloyd travel Service in Melbourne) to Leftwich, 9 September 1938, CZA A330/269.

⁶³ Bentwich to Leftwich, 3 September 1936, CZA A330/468; Leftwich to Earle Page, 5 October 1936, YIVO RG366/711.

⁶⁴ Such a dismissal or even denial of the sacredness of the Jewish Land was no novelty in Jewish history. As far back as the early eighteenth century, a group of Dutch Sephardic Jews already openly negated the holiness of the Land: Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto; the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 37.

⁶⁵ Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 89.

such arguments. The suggestion by certain British media that he believed in “the fulfilment of the prophecies” infuriated him, as he wrote to Zangwill in 1902.⁶⁶ For the New Territorialists of the 1930s onwards, the concept of a Holy Land to which the Jewish people had a historic right was counterproductive:

If we would have a secure home, so that we may give up our endless life of wandering and rehabilitate ourselves in our own eyes and in the eyes of the world, we must above all, not dream of restoring ancient Judea. We must not attach ourselves to the place where ou[r] political life was once violently interrupted and destroyed.⁶⁷

Jews simply needed a land of their own: “Thither we shall take with us the most sacred possessions which we have saved from the ship-wreck of [our] former fatherland, the God-idea and the Bible. It is only these which have made our old fatherland the Holy Land, and not Jerusalem or the Jordan.”⁶⁸

In 1905, the Russian Territorialists wrote to their (potential) following that the ITO-land would not be a land of “milk and honey” as such places did not exist. Still, much could be achieved. In order for things to succeed, not only motivation by economic want, “but also by a spark of national self-consciousness” was needed.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, as we have seen, the practical foundations and ambitions of Territorialism prevailed and the word “national” was dropped from the ITO-constitution after its first congress, as this was considered to make the Territorialist initiatives more likely to succeed.⁷⁰

Zangwill believed that the emigration problem was of an economic nature, needing a developed, and therefore already populated land that could receive large numbers of people as fast as possible. By contrast, Zangwill saw the more general Jewish problem not as an economic or even as a cultural or spiritual problem, but he claimed that it was of a political nature, demanding the opposite type of location: an empty, unpopulated territory. These views thus demonstrate a contradiction in Zangwill’s thinking: on the one hand, he was against formulating a clear political Territorialist

⁶⁶ Original: “die Erfüllung der Prophezeiungen”: Herzl to Zangwill, 30 April 1902, CZA A120/681, p. 38.

⁶⁷ Text by Herwald about necessity Territorialism, [1943], YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid. This quotation was actually taken from Leon Pinsker: Alroey, “Mesopotamia,” 913.

⁶⁹ Translation of letter ‘To Russian Jewry’, signed by M. Mandelstamm and J.W. Jasinowski for the Russian members of the ITO Directorate, [1905], CZA A36/8.

⁷⁰ Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 86.

ideology. On the other hand, he envisioned the Territorialist project in political terms. This ambivalence regarding Territorialism's degree of "politicalness" would remain throughout the movement's existence, but was partly solved in favour of non-partisanship in the Freeland-era.

If political statehood was going to be a slow process anyway, it would be better to select a location that would be able to save the Jews of the "here and now", while at the same time offering future perspectives. Although the United States still had ample available space (and the ITO-involvement in the so-called Galveston project demonstrated the movement's acknowledgement of this), this was not where the Jewish nation would be maintained in the long run. In an ITO-land Zangwill saw options to address both problems at once: this territory would mean an immediate solution for the refugees, while at the same time laying the foundations for a future Jewish political existence.⁷¹ Zangwill believed such a place was attainable in the short run. All that was needed for the beginning was already there: the plebs, the patriots and the philanthropists.⁷² By 1936, the Territorialist assessment of the right solution for the "Jewish problem" had slightly changed: large-scale emigration might now only postpone the acuteness of this issue: as who could guarantee that in twenty years' time those emigrated Jews did not have to be evacuated again?⁷³ At the same time, an acute solution was needed more than ever. Freeland League-member Joseph Kruk even argued that it was better to find a bad territory than no territory at all.⁷⁴

So what was this future autonomous Jewish Territorialist state or settlement to look like? The minimum requirements were the presence of "[a] continuous uncultivated stretch of territory sufficient for the settlement of several millions of inhabitants", a limited size of the existing population, favourable climatic and soil conditions, and a political situation "rendering possible—in proportion to the growth and permanence of the Jewish element—the formation of a self-governing Jewish Colony or Province."⁷⁵ This settlement would then be of a predominantly agricultural or, especially in the later Territorialist ideals, agro-industrial nature. The Territorialists realised that not everyone

⁷¹ Zangwill to Mandelstamm, 21 August 1907, CZA A120/59; Zangwill to Central Russian Directorate, 19 November 1906, CZA A120/60, pp. 6-7.

⁷² 'Land of Refuge for Jews: New Plan Proposed by Israel Zangwill', *Boston Evening Transcript* (7 October 1905): 5.

⁷³ Black book with the minutes of the British department of the Freeland League, 1935-6: remark by T.B. Herwald during meeting 14 January 1936, CZA A330/14.

⁷⁴ Original: "besser ein schlechtes Territorium als gar keines": Klein to Leftwich, 31 July 1937, CZA A330/14.

⁷⁵ M.D. Eder, 'Cyrenaica', 1932, CZA A330/14, pp. 71-80, 74.

was equally suited for colonisation work. In fact, the Zionist concept of the ideal “halutz”, or settler, also resonated in Territorialist thinking. When writing about the newly founded German Freeland group in the late 1930s, one Territorialist commented that the Germans did not offer the same “colonisation material” that Eastern Europe offered for Palestine.⁷⁶

Thematic frameworks

Thus far, we have been concerned with the essentials of Territorialist ideology. Now we turn to an introduction of the six thematic frameworks guiding the analysis that forms the core of this study.

Theme 1: Politics and Culture

Historians who were themselves actors in the history that they were writing have tended to view Jewish history through the lens of Zionist endeavours.⁷⁷ For instance, rabbi and philosopher Joseph Ber Soloveitchik argued for an analysis and contextualization of Zionism outside the strict confines of the history of European nationalism. In Soloveitchik’s narrative, as David Myers formulates it, the creation of the State of Israel was “an important point along the eschatological pathway of Jewish history” and should be analysed as such.⁷⁸ Myers also distinguishes a certain “immanentist impulse” in the work and thought of central Jewish scholars Ben-Zion Dinur, Gershom Scholem and Yitzhak Baer as feeding into such a narrative: Judaism and Jewish history developed best on their own, without external influences.⁷⁹ In line with this development, especially after the Holocaust, Zionism transcended Judaism and took its place. Jewish law became

⁷⁶ Half-torn German text about a German Territorialist Group, [no date], YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁷⁷ This tendency is described in Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews : The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 61; Jonathan Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steve Zipperstein (Cambridge: 2004), 3; David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past : European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 182. Moshe Leib Lilienblum’s career serves as an example of a reinterpretation by a Zionist of his own pre-Zionist writings to fit into a broader Zionist narrative: Marcus Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish Autobiography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 374.

⁷⁸ David N. Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 159.

⁷⁹ Myers nuances this statement by stressing that the scholars he mentions were not entirely biased and monolithic in their Zionist convictions: Myers, *Resisting History*, 163-4.

Hebrew law and Holocaust victims were presented as too weak to shape the Jewish future. By contrast, Zionist heroes represented the culmination of Jewish history.⁸⁰

These first generations of historians of Jewish nationalism saw a need to show that despite the fact that Zionism as a political movement emerged rather late, the history leading up to its creation was actually much longer and richer. Continuities of Zionist thinking were sought by rereading the past, with all the teleological pitfalls that such an aspiration entailed. Jacob Katz, one of the foremost Jewish historians of the twentieth century, and one whose rich body of work was partly developed within a Zionist institutional context, offers another example of this at times farfetched effort to (re)create a pre-history of Zionism. While being critical of other historians' tracing of proto-Zionist elements, Katz himself distinguishes what he calls "forerunners" of Zionism as far back as the late eighteenth century.⁸¹

Other historians have offered a corrective to this backward reading of history by showing the cultural context in which political Zionism developed. Insightful, also, is Larry Ray's observation that the definition of politics has broadened over time.⁸² For a fuller understanding of political processes this "new" definition compels us to look beyond only the activities of political elites to other expressions of political behaviour. Several scholars of Jewish history have recently described such manifestations of "alternative politics", especially in the cultural sphere.

Olga Litvak, for instance, challenges the accepted notion that Jewish nationalism should be seen as a reaction to the failure of the activities of the Jewish enlighteners. This failure was proven conclusively by the new outbursts of anti-Semitism from the latter quarter of the nineteenth century onwards.⁸³ According to Litvak, however, Jewish

⁸⁰ Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, 178, 182.

⁸¹ Jacob Katz, "The Forerunners of Zionism," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (London: Cassell, 1996), 33-4. Michael Walzer describes the Zionist historiographical tendency to negate the Jewish exilic past in favour of a mono-directional Zionist narrative as natural to a national-liberation project, but also as a mistake and a failure. A post-revisionist historiography should now focus on the untold Jewish stories: Michael Walzer, "History and National Liberation," in *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right*, eds. Anita Shapira and Derek Jonathan Penslar (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), 1-7.

⁸² Larry Ray, "A 'conscious pariah'".

⁸³ Olga Litvak, *Haskala : The Romantic Movement in Judaism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012). Jacob Katz argues that the Haskalah movement should not even be seen as a forerunner of Jewish nationalism. According to Katz, it is not when political ideas are formed, but when they become socially unifying forces, translated into political action, that the actual forerunners of nationalism can be discerned. Litvak reacts to Katz, amongst others: Litvak, *Haskalah*, 49; Katz, "The Forerunners of Zionism," 35-6, 38, 49-40. Diaspora Nationalist/Yiddishist Elias Tcherikower, like his mentor Simon Dubnow, adhered to a related perceived evolution from naive Emancipationism to Autonomism in the Russian Empire: Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 45, 102.

nationalist behaviour developed not as a rejection of *maskilic* beliefs and failures, but on the contrary, within the framework of the *Haskalah*. To support this claim, Litvak argues that the Jewish Enlightenment was not, as has been argued, exclusively a rational, emancipatory movement, but was also heavily influenced by German Romanticism, which developed and sustained notions of peoplehood and a shared national past. The wish to preserve the Jewish nation and its customs and traditions was therefore a national outgrowth of this way of thinking.⁸⁴ With this analysis, Litvak further develops Eric Hobsbawm's acknowledgement of the romantic roots of Zionism.⁸⁵ Accepting the *maskilic* Romanticism and therefore the link between the *Haskalah* and Jewish nationalism, paradoxically also helps to explain the Zionist and Territorialist embrace of a scientific approach to settlement and colonisation: an attachment to scientific methods was already inherent in *Haskalah*-thinking.⁸⁶ The colonial attachments of both movements could be seen as part of this tendency to scientific thinking.

Both the approach of the older Zionist historians such as Dinur, Scholem and Baer to link historiography to the Zionist political and cultural project, and this illuminating *Haskalah*-framework, aid to better understand the development of Jewish nationalism. This development constituted a process in which politics and culture merged through mutual influence. Kenneth Moss complicates this picture by challenging Ernest Gellner's and Eric Hobsbawm's assumption that modern nationalism encompassed all elements of the nation's life, including expressions of cultural behaviour. Moss supports his claim that culture and politics could be separate spheres in which the same actors were active by presenting several examples of individuals for whom their staunch nationalism constituted a distinct project from their cultural endeavours. The very same people could cherish seemingly contradictory goals and beliefs within political and cultural spheres.⁸⁷ Whether Jewish politics and culture were intrinsically connected or not, an understanding of their relationship is absolutely crucial for an analysis of modern Jewish politics.

⁸⁴ Litvak, *Haskalah*, 22.

⁸⁵ Discussed in: Anthony D. Smith, "Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism," *Israel Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1995): 2.

⁸⁶ Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York/London: Routledge, 1991), 152.

⁸⁷ Kenneth B. Moss, "Arnold in Aysheshok, Schiller in Shnipishok: Imperatives of 'Culture' in East European Jewish Nationalism and Socialism," *Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 3 (2009): 540, 575; Kenneth B. Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). For a study of Russian-Jewish public cultural institutions in relation to the broader Jewish populace see Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

Several recent studies have added narratives in which political actors found a refuge in the cultural sphere when history proved their aims unattainable in the political one. Since the people involved remained the same over time, this created a diffuse picture in which politics and culture merged and interacted, but also came in opposition to one another.⁸⁸ To a certain extent, this development from a focus on politics to a primary engagement with cultural work, also discernable in Territorialist history, represents a move away from a perception of modernity in which a belief in progress via politics seemed warranted. After this departure from the main direction of modernity, the investment in culture at times overrode the broader concern of Jewish survival. Culture was then seen as more important than the physical safety of individual Jews.⁸⁹

An analytical approach to Jewish political history that also takes Jewish cultural behaviour into consideration offers useful tools to understand Territorialism as well. Some of the movement's protagonists not only wavered between different political movements over time, be it Zionism, Diaspora Nationalism or Territorialism, but they also used their careers in the realm of Jewish culture to further different aims than their political ambitions would ostensibly have demanded. Moreover, both political rationale and romantic impulses were driving forces for the way in which Territorialists envisioned the Jewish future. In the following chapters, we will discuss both these political and cultural considerations on the part of the Territorialists. Such considerations sometimes reinforced, but at times also contradicted one another, but at all times were central for the direction the movement took.

*Theme 2: Tradition and Modernity*⁹⁰

Territorialism demonstrated that it was possible to be simultaneously modern and Jewish. This dual commitment to both tradition and modernity was complex and we

⁸⁸ For example: Cecile Esther Kuznitz, *Yivo and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 10-11; Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 19, 22, 36, 160.

⁸⁹ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 170.

⁹⁰ I distinguish between the terms "modernity", "modernisation", and "modernism", although the latter two could be considered part of the first category. The (Jewish) project of modernity refers to the way in which an individual or group relates and reacts to contemporary realities and challenges. This project has an explicitly future-oriented dimension, although, as we shall see, elements of a traditional past can serve as strong drivers for the definition of this future. For a collection of essays dealing with Jewish intellectuals' engagement with Jewish modernity see Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).

should therefore explore its perimeters in order to fully grasp how the movement negotiated opposing notions of Jewishness.

Territorialism began as a political project that imagined the Jewish future along modern nationalist lines, with themes at its core like autonomy, nationhood and scientific and social progress. The Jewish moral universal mission made Judaism more connected to modernity than any other religion; after all, the Jewish God was present in everyday life. For this reason, Zangwill saw Jewish tradition as highly suitable for a communal revival.⁹¹

As time passed, and especially after the Shoah had dramatically altered Jewish reality, Territorialism shifted towards a more backward-looking and culturalist, perhaps even traditional interpretation of its own meaning and aims. With this, it largely abandoned the project of modernity it had before supported and participated in. This image challenges the recent "revisionist" scholarly assertion, observed by Jonathan Frankel, that modern Jewish political behaviour looked towards modernity rather than falling back on tradition.⁹² Historians have tried to nuance the Zionist-dominated scholarly trend to connect "old" and "new" as a way of finding legitimisation for the Zionist project in the Jewish past. The history of Territorialism aids this nuancing endeavour, but at the same time problematises the future-focused approach.

Insightful is Benjamin Nathans' assertion that there were different versions of modernity in Western and Central Europe, as compared to the Russian Empire in the same period.⁹³ The idea that Jews in the East differed completely from those in the West was an image prevalent in Territorialist thinking as well. Jonathan Frankel dates the historiographical use of an East/West framework back to before 1881.⁹⁴ Gershom Scholem's observation of a certain "cult of Eastern Jews"⁹⁵ was also discernible in the writings of Zangwill and the famous German writer and Freeland-affiliate Alfred Döblin: both felt that the most authentic forms of Judaism were to be found in the East. Herzl himself had believed in the essential health of Eastern European Jewry,⁹⁶ and Diaspora Nationalist Yisroel Efroikin saw the Eastern European petty merchant as the source of

⁹¹ Zangwill to Central Russian Directorate, [1906], CZA A120/60, p. 5.

⁹² Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews," 27. Frankel mentions historians Michael Graetz, Eli Lederhendler, and Israel Bartal as examples of scholars setting and following this trend.

⁹³ Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 7.

⁹⁴ Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews," 12.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁶ Schwartz, "'Human Engineering'," 103.

Jewish authenticity.⁹⁷ Before, Eastern Jewish immigrants to the West had often been perceived as uncultured and barbaric.⁹⁸ However, by the late nineteenth century, Jews from the East had started to represent a genuineness and essentialism that Territorialists, and other strands of Jewish politics for that matter, aspired to maintain and expand.⁹⁹

This orientalist gaze towards the East had already started to shift during the early years of the twentieth century. Increasingly, Jewish political activism transcended the East/West divide.¹⁰⁰ As an illustration of this, the 1909 joint conference of the American sections of the SERP, Nachman Syrkin's SS, and Poale Zion, organised by Diaspora Nationalist Chaim Zhitlowsky, shows that politics of the East were not geographically limited to Eastern Europe.¹⁰¹

Multiple "modernities" were thus in dialogue with one another. This dynamic had a longer history, as Litvak shows with her interpretation of the *Haskalah* as a mostly Eastern European project: it combined "a conservative devotion to the past with a radical passion for renovation".¹⁰² What was specific to the Eastern version of modernity was the fact that it, much more than its Western counterpart or other, non-Jewish modernities in the same Eastern context, had to define itself in relationship to a still strong religious tradition, as well as to an undefined choice for a national language. Moreover, what made Eastern European nationalisms so specific was the fact that they were driven and developed by an intelligentsia in opposition to the autocratic state and traditional social structures.¹⁰³ This model was especially suitable for the Jewish case, as Jews often existed outside fixed societal settings. At the same time, Jewish elites found it challenging to represent a larger following. Zangwill belonged to the Jewish intellectual elite, but was never really part of the Jewish *community*. As Eli Lederhendler phrases it: "The

⁹⁷ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 121.

⁹⁸ Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 173.

⁹⁹ The negative image of the East would gain new currency with the rise of a more general political schism in Europe after 1917. This "new" East/West divide complicated the Territorialist endeavours, especially in its Surinam project.

¹⁰⁰ Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews," 18, 31. Martin Buber cultivated the notion of the "Jew as Oriental" by presenting the Eastern Jew as an example in the West that should render all Jews orientals: Mendes-Flohr, *Divided Passions*, ch. 4, esp. 85-6, 88. For the non-Jewish world, the Jews, especially after their emancipation in the West, had come to represent both the orient and the occident: Barbara E. Mann, *Space and Place in Jewish Studies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 61.

¹⁰¹ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 63.

¹⁰² Litvak, *Haskalah*, 29. *Maskil* Nachman Krochmal showed that one could live as a Jew and be modern at the same time: Litvak, *Haskalah*, 125.

¹⁰³ Moss, "Arnold in Eishyshok," 543, 554.

imagination of the intellectual Jew is often more an antidote than a devising tool of community."¹⁰⁴

Following Nathans, the major conflict between the two versions of modernity was the price to be paid for emancipation. In the West, the Jews were expected to assimilate in order to gain full rights as citizens and participate in the project of modernity. In Russia, this "Faustian deal" was never on the table, and modernity became much more a drive to political autonomy, and by extension Zionism, than to emancipation.¹⁰⁵ However, such "self-emancipation" only became the alternative to legal emancipation after Leon Pinsker had declared it so in his famous 1882 pamphlet.¹⁰⁶ Where Pinsker's analysis would come to serve as legitimisation for the Zionist project in Palestine, as early as 1883, Jewish historian and father of Diaspora Nationalism Simon Dubnow concluded that in the Russian context Self-Emancipation referred to an internal reform of Russian Jewish society and even to a personal reform of Jews themselves.¹⁰⁷ Pinsker, generally seen as one of the central proto-Zionists and proto-Territorialists, was thus at the same time a proto-Diaspora Nationalist.

It is this second meaning of Self-Emancipation, referring to the *cultural* preservation and regeneration of the Jewish people that became the most important "Russian" influence on Territorialism. At the same time, Territorialism was also a Western European and especially British-led movement. This meant that the Western version of modernity played a significant role in determining the Territorialist programme as well. This Western modernity did not mean, as Katz has argued, a bipolar choice between either full absorption into society or the pursuit of national aspirations now that the end of the Jewish Emancipation process had been reached.¹⁰⁸ Also in the West, anti-Semitic forces had pushed Jews back into segregated Jewishness. With the influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants to Western Europe, the Western Jews sought amongst themselves a second form of group identity and cohesion, one defined in contrast to the Eastern Jews and with appreciation of Emancipation values.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Eli Lederhendler, "Rereading the Americanization Narratives of Antin, Zangwill and Cahan, Imagining and Unimagining the Jewish Community," in *Imagining the American Jewish Community*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Waltham/Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2007), 266.

¹⁰⁵ Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Frankel, *The Damascus Affair*, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 76-7.

¹⁰⁸ Katz, "The Forerunners of Zionism," 41.

¹⁰⁹ Shulamit Volkov, "The Dynamics of Dissimilation. Ostjuden and German Jews," in *The Jewish Response to German Culture. From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg (London: 1985), 199-200.

In the post-Zangwillian era, under the influence of the socialist strand in Territorialism, a more global approach to migratory trends would come to override the older conception of a division between East and West. People like Joseph Leftwich and Isaac Steinberg personified the merging of East and West, and of religion and progressive social and political thinking. Not only the Territorialists themselves, but also those who affiliated themselves with the movement had such dual attachments. Nathan Birnbaum, affiliated with the Freeland League, was one of the earliest Zionists, had socialist leanings, was active in Diaspora Jewish politics, but became at the same time a driving force for modern Jewish orthodoxy. Rather than looking for dichotomies in Territorialist history, this analysis therefore supports a more holistic approach, in which seemingly contradictory notions can exist side by side in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Theme 3: Diaspora

Connected to Territorialism's understanding of the notions of East and West and the project of modernity was the movement's stance towards the Jewish Diaspora. Despite his Zionist ambitions, Herzl considered Europe the cultural homeland of the Jews where only their socio-economic and political integration had failed. A (temporary) transplantation would serve as a remedy for this.¹¹⁰ The Diaspora represented the state of normality: in their dispersion, Jews had found "rootedness [...] grounded in uprootedness".¹¹¹ Nonetheless, one of Zionism's most remarkable accomplishments was the transference of the concept of the daily home from the Diaspora to Palestine. As Rovner phrases it: "the European lands of their [the Jews] birth had first to be imagined as sites of exile. The Zionists' most radical act of conception was to reterritorialize their homelands as alien, and a foreign landscape—Palestine—as home."¹¹²

The investment in the Diaspora by the Territorialists aids to challenge the idea that there was only one "sacred center", in Palestine. As Ra'anana Boustan, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow have pointed out, it is a fairly recent development that Jewish historiography has started to allow more space for the study of the Jewish Diaspora on its own terms. Even though for some time now, scholarship has no longer been dominated by a Zionist agenda, the juxtaposition of a territorial Zionism and a non-territorial

¹¹⁰ Dimitry Shumsky, "'This Ship Is Zion!' Travel, Tourism, and Cultural Zionism in Theodor Herzl's *Altneuland*," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 104, no. 3 (2014): 478-80.

¹¹¹ Howard Adelman and Elazar Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge: Rites and Rights in Minority Repatriation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 159.

¹¹² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 45.

Diaspora, even when treated in a more positive way as mutually reinforcing, has limited the study of Diaspora Judaism within other frameworks.¹¹³

Negation of Exile vs. Ahad Ha'Am

The negative assessment of the Jewish Diaspora started gaining ground during the *Haskalah*-era. *Maskilic* literature accused Diasporic existence of being effeminate and weak. Hannah Arendt ascribed the continued existence of a somewhat isolated Jewish Diaspora not to a marginalisation by the wider Christian world, but, on the contrary, she saw it as the effect of a conscious Jewish disassociation.¹¹⁴ This placed the Diaspora outside of history in the eyes of those who opposed its continued existence.¹¹⁵

This negative discourse was later taken up in the Zionist project of showing the degenerate aspects of Jewish life in the *galut*. These views constituted the basis for a larger project of *shelilat haglut/ shelilat hagolah*, or negation of exile.¹¹⁶ The Diaspora was seen as a “wasteland [...], a scene of continuing persecution and suffering”. A return to Zion, situated in Palestine would relieve the Jews of this desperate state.¹¹⁷

However, the Land could not be conceived without the exile as its counterweight: the dispersion had kept alive the notion of the Holy Land.¹¹⁸ An influential take on the meaning of the Jewish Diaspora was developed by Asher Ginsberg, generally known by his pen name Ahad Ha'Am (“One of the People”, 1856-1927). Arguably “Zionism’s most prominent ideologue and its most important internal critic”¹¹⁹ believed the actual danger

¹¹³ Ra'anan S. Boustan, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow, "Anthropology, History, and the Remaking of Jewish Studies," in *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History: Authority, Diaspora, Tradition*, eds. Ra'anan S. Boustan, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 1-2, 8-10, 13-14; Albert J. Baumgarten and Marina Rustow, "Judaism and Tradition: Continuity, Change, and Innovation," in *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History: Authority, Diaspora, Tradition*, eds. Ra'anan S. Boustan, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 210, 234. Recently, Barbara Mann has offered a more positive analysis of the concept of 'Diaspora': Mann, *Space and Place*, ch. 6.

¹¹⁴ Ron H. Feldman, "Introduction: The Jew as Pariah: The Case of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975)," in *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), xlvii.

¹¹⁵ Although there were also those anti-historicists who believed that remaining outside of history kept Judaism pure: Myers, *Resisting History*, 171.

¹¹⁶ Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women : Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society* (Waltham/Hanover: Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 2004), 45; Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews," 4; Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, 178. Jacob Klatzkin (1882-1948) was one of the main Zionist anti-Diaspora thinkers. See several of his writings in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 314-28.

¹¹⁷ Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 158.

¹¹⁸ Mann, *Space and Place*, 58.

¹¹⁹ Alan Dowty, "Much Ado About Little: Ahad Ha'am's "Truth from Eretz Yisrael," Zionism, and the Arabs," *Israel Studies* 5, no. 2 (2000): 156.

was not to Jewish life, but to the Jewish way of life. The Jewish state as imagined by Herzl would only really serve Western Jewry, by making them equal to other nations who had already acquired statehood. The majority of Jews, however, did not live in the West, but in the East, and it was for them that a real solution needed to be found. Palestine should not become the mass immigration destination that Herzl's political Zionism had thought up, but it should be developed into a cultural and spiritual centre. From this centre a force of inspiration would emanate for the preservation of Jewish Diaspora life.¹²⁰

In 1891, Ahad Ha'Am wrote his famous essay 'Truth from Eretz Israel', a biting critique of the in his eyes uncoordinated Jewish settlement work in Palestine. The ongoing activities were not only deplorable on moral grounds, as Jewish settlers were turned into colonists, but would also not lead to "a complete and lasting answer to the Jewish question, [but it would] only add the question of the Jews where it did not previously exist—in the land of our fathers". In other words, as also Zangwill would later repeatedly argue: Palestine would just become another part of the Diaspora.¹²¹

In his essay, Ahad Ha'Am therefore asked the question: "To Eretz Israel or to America?" His answer: to both. Palestine should become a breeding ground and vessel for the national spirit; quality and not quantity was most important. If such quality could not be achieved, Ahad Ha'Am was convinced that this would directly threaten the future of the Jewish people. In that case, he gave preference to the people over the land: "Let the land be destroyed, and yet the people remains full of life and force[.]"¹²² This statement sounds remarkably similar to Zangwill's later phrase "better Zionism without Zion than Zion without Zionism". Or, as Ahad Ha'Am would have it: better true Judaism without Palestine, than Palestine devoid of true Jewish meaning.

Territorialists themselves also saw a connection between Territorialism and Ahad Ha'Am's legacy. A document written during the war years, most probably by Territorialist Abraham Kin, carried the Hebrew title 'Lo Ze ha-Derekh' (This Is Not The Way), directly

¹²⁰ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 117; Ahad Ha'Am, "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem [1897]," in *The Zionist Idea*, ed. Arthur Herzberg (Philadelphia/Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1997). A politicised version of this thinking would later be echoed by Bernard Lazare and Hannah Arendt, the latter of whom, although she did feel Zionism would help write Jews back into history, at the same time envisioned a Zionism that was primarily revolutionary amongst its own people: A. Dirk Moses, "Das Römische Gespräch in a New Key: Hannah Arendt, Genocide, and the Defense of Republican Civilization," *The Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 4 (2013): 894; Feldman, "Introduction," lvii, lix. For a discussion of the "uniqueness" vs. "normalization" debate within the Zionist movement—a debate in which Ahad Ha'Am played a central role— see Almog, *Zionism and History*, 157-165.

¹²¹ Dowty, "Much Ado About Little," 168, 175, 176, 158.

¹²² Ibid., 161, 163.

referring to Ahad Ha'Am's 1889 article of the same title.¹²³ Some years later, Freeland Saul Goodman praised Ahad Ha'Am's realism in contrast to Herzl's naiveté. The Zionist leader had been mistaken in his mildly positive assessment of Jewish assimilation. With this position, he had neglected the Diaspora: "To him it [assimilation] was not a symptom of disintegration and self-escape as his contemporary, Ahad Ha'am, so shrewdly pointed out."¹²⁴

Despite this seeming compatibility between Territorialism and Ahad Ha'Am's thought, the latter did not support the Uganda proposal.¹²⁵ Vice-versa, for many Territorialists Palestine did not carry the spiritual, religious, or cultural value that it did for Ahad Ha'Am. Nonetheless, Ahad Ha'Am reached his conclusions six years before Zionism was officially organised as a movement, and fourteen years before Territorialism was born. Territorialism was thus not a sudden deviation from Jewish nationalist behaviour, incited by the Uganda "debacle", but one of Pianko's "roads not taken", or in fact a road that *was* taken, but (actively) forgotten in modern Jewish historiography.

Ahad Ha'Am's approach offers a framework that allows for a broader interpretation of both Zionism and Jewish politics in general as it shows that an appreciation of the Jewish Diaspora was not antithetical to any national project. Political actors explicitly stated their belief in the *galut*: Zelig Kalmanovitch followed philosopher Yehezkel Kaufmann's 1934 statement that the denial of exile was the result of a Jewish internalisation of anti-Semitism.¹²⁶ His colleague Efraim Efron asserted that the idea of the Jewish exile was destined to outlive the concept of the state.¹²⁷ Economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen wrote in 1919 that the solution of Jewish homelessness would also end Jewish intellectual pre-eminence in the world. The Jews' detachment from current trends, combined with their ancient cultural heritage had positively set them apart. With the end of their isolation in the Diaspora they would become just like everyone else.¹²⁸

¹²³ Anonymous, 'Lo Ze ha-Derekh', [1943], YIVO RG554, Box 1.

¹²⁴ S[aul] G[oodman], 'From Our Point of View', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946) 2, 16: 2.

¹²⁵ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 61-2. The fact that Ahad Ha'Am supported the U.S. as a Jewish emigration destination while opposing Uganda can be understood through Almog's interpretation of Ahad Ha'Am's thinking as a form of "historical determinism" of the Jewish national future: For Ahad Ha'Am, the U.S. and Palestine were part of the same pre-determined path, whereas Uganda was a deviation: Almog, *Zionism and History*, 67-80, esp. 76.

¹²⁶ Joshua Karlip, "At the Crossroads between War and Genocide: A Reassessment of Jewish Ideology in 1940," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (2005): 190.

¹²⁷ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 150-1.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 159.

Degeneration/Regeneration

Connected to this changing evaluation of the Jewish Diaspora in Jewish politics is the notion of “degeneration”. Jews throughout history were not just inactive victims of the anti-Semitic images that were used against them. They incorporated such discourse in different ways. This then could lead to self-hatred, denial of the validity of the anti-Semitic images or, especially under the influence of Enlightenment thinking, to an essential concurrence with the accusations in turn leading to a wish to alter the Jews’ deplorable, degenerate condition.¹²⁹

The usage of the terms “degeneration” and “regeneration” of the Jews has a longer history in the modern period than Max Nordau’s much-discussed 1892 publication *Entartung* (Degeneration) and his call for the creation of a “Muscle Jew”.¹³⁰ Especially Wilhelm Dohm’s essay ‘Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden’ (1781), as well as Abbé Grégoire’s ‘Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des Juifs’ (1785) were most influential in popularising this new discourse.¹³¹ It was, however, Nordau’s book, in addition to his own central position within the soon to be formed Zionist movement, that enabled the connection to be forged in dominant Jewish political thinking between Jewish regeneration and the establishment of a Jewish state. After all, neither Dohm and Grégoire, nor the *maskilim*, had propagated a territorial solution to the Jews’ depraved situation. On the contrary, they had actively promoted the betterment of the Jews as a minority in the states in which they lived, with or without the eventual aim of assimilation.

With the rise of modern Jewish nationalist movements during the late nineteenth century, Jewish political actors and theorists sought to enable a reformulation and re-establishment of the Jewish people, not as a victim, but as a strong and thriving nation. Following Nordau’s lead, a solution to the deplorable situation of the Jews was to be found in their regeneration. This mending would have to happen through their physical betterment, creating or regaining their lost masculinity,¹³² and an autonomous Jewish existence in Palestine would help bring this about. Once it had become a key term in

¹²⁹ Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 6.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 53, 183. *Entartung* did not deal specifically with Jewish degeneration, but with more general social developments that Nordau observed. His own career as a leading Zionist eventually forged the connection between the concept and the Jewish (national) future. For more on the Zionist concept of “Muscular Jewry” see also Almog, *Zionism and History*, 108-118.

¹³¹ Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 5.

¹³² Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 53, 208.

modern thinking after the Enlightenment, the step from just regeneration to *national* regeneration was a small one to take.¹³³ At the same time, the image in the minds of Western Jews of the physically degenerate state of Eastern Jews strengthened the already discussed boundary between East and West.¹³⁴

The national regeneration lens became a way of looking at contemporary Jewish public activities. From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, a wide array of Jewish organisations increasingly undertook various philanthropic and especially settlement work in Palestine, but mainly in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. The educational work of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Turkey was indeed part of a regeneration of the Jews, but within the non-Jewish settings in which they lived, and unconnected to Palestine.¹³⁵ Western European Palestinophilia, traditionally seen as one of the main drivers for the activities in the Middle East of figures like Moses Montefiore, was also not prompted by a belief in national redemption or regeneration, but by a more practical wish to modernise the *yishuv*.¹³⁶

Even though the concept of Jewish regeneration also occurred in Territorialist discourse, a similar more practical meaning of the term was prevalent, devoid of any spiritual or religious connection to Palestine. While he was still a young socialist-Zionist in Russia, Ben-Adir (pseudonym of Avrom Rosin), had been one of the co-founders of the periodical *Vozrozhdenie* or “Rebirth” in 1903.¹³⁷ As the main ideologue of the interwar Territorialist movement, Ben-Adir underlined that Jewish regeneration was to come about through an actual survival of Jews, but also through a preservation of Jewish religion and culture in the Diaspora.

Like Diaspora Nationalists, Territorialists believed in the regenerative qualities inherent in modern Yiddish culture. According to them, the *maskilim* had also neglected

¹³³ Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 85. Also: Schwartz, “‘Human Engineering,’” 95. Almog, *Zionism and History*, 9-83, esp. 23-37.

¹³⁴ Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 59. Mitchell Hart argues that there was also a countertrend, namely the conviction that there existed a Jewish tradition of medicine and hygiene that rendered the Jewish body the *healthy* body par excellence: Mitchell Bryan Hart, *The Healthy Jew: The Symbiosis of Judaism and Modern Medicine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), e.g. 3. Zionist race scientists also offered a scientific approach to Jewish regeneration, but defined it in explicitly national terms. Interestingly, this could lead to both positive and negative racial analyses of Jewish Diaspora life: John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-De-Siècle Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 12, ch. 6.

¹³⁵ Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 61; C. S. Monaco, *The Rise of Modern Jewish Politics: Extraordinary Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 10.

¹³⁶ Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 17.

¹³⁷ Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 279.

the value of Jewish traditionalism. In the interwar period, Kalmanovitch therefore advocated a moral regeneration of the Jewish nation through a fusion of Jewish tradition and European humanism.¹³⁸ Diaspora Nationalists and Territorialists formulated a non-statist approach to regeneration, one that would be achieved through a community-based rather than a state-based approach. In 1891, Simon Dubnow had described statelessness as a higher stage in the Jews' national development. His intellectual successor Chaim Zhitlowsky had taken this thought further by declaring the Yiddish language the basis of Jewish identity.¹³⁹ As we will see, Zhitlowsky would become an important inspiration for, and supporter of the Territorialist movement.

However, "territory" still lay at the root of Territorialism. Both Gabriel Piterberg and Todd Presner point out that the Jew as coloniser created a way of writing Jews back into history.¹⁴⁰ As one Territorialist wrote to Freeland Leaguer Saul Goodman after the Second World War, undertaking a Jewish mass colonisation of some "free, uninhabited, waste, territory" would make the Jew a full negotiation partner in the United Nations setting. This full participation in world society would help to remove the stigma of the ahistorical outsider that had plagued the Jews for centuries.¹⁴¹ It also had the effect of debunking the stereotypical myth of the Jew as a city-dweller. As author Arthur Conan Doyle wrote to Zangwill in 1906: "[T]he Jew has never been an agriculturist. I don't think he has any soil hunger in his blood—he is gregarious—he goes where there are crowds of people, and where money is to be made— small blame to him."¹⁴²

Universal Mission

Nationalism would reinstate Jewish dignity and make Jews respected by their neighbours.¹⁴³ The meaning of a regenerated and fully developed Jewish existence would, however, result in much more than simply gentile respect. It would also redeem the non-Jewish world. Territorialist sources contain many references to such a universal mission for the Jews that Territorialism could fulfil.

¹³⁸ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 82, 178; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 7.

¹³⁹ Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 4-5.

¹⁴⁰ Todd Samuel Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007), 170-1, 185; Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London/New York: Verso, 2008), 264.

¹⁴¹ Text by Jacob Berkowitz, sent to Goodman, [1945], YIVO RG366/77.

¹⁴² Zangwill, 'Letters and the ITO', *The Fortnightly Review* (January-June 1906), CZA A330/153.

¹⁴³ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 103-4.

Ezra Mendelsohn relies on American Reform Rabbi Henry Berkowitz' 1899 statement that this Jewish universalist tendency should be dated back to the eighth century prophets.¹⁴⁴ However, more convincing is Amos Funkenstein's argument that the universalist impulse was in fact a nineteenth century creation. For centuries, the uniqueness of the Jewish people had been defined on the basis of their divine "chosenness": "Their difference secured their existence." After this religious reasoning had lost much of its significance due to a process of secularisation, the Jews' uniqueness had to be redefined. Their "universality", or, in other words, the importance of their continued existence for the good of all mankind provided such legitimisation.¹⁴⁵ Thus instead of becoming critical of their abnormality, secularising Jews found a way to celebrate their distinctiveness.¹⁴⁶ Nineteenth century "proto-Zionist" Moses Hess followed Italian philosopher and politician Giuseppe Mazzini by arguing that the universal significance of the Jews was reached through their national existence. By becoming a nation in the modern sense of the word, Jews became part of mankind.¹⁴⁷ According to Dinur, messianic elements had been part of the development of Zionism, whereas Gershom Scholem stated that Zionism replaced messianism altogether.¹⁴⁸ Yuri Slezkine considers it remarkable how, in this way, Zionism managed to de-religionise traditional aspects of Judaism by turning the promised land into a "home" and by becoming more religious in its secularism than any other form of nationalism.¹⁴⁹

As for non-Zionist politics, Avineri points out the dilemma of the new, secular Jewish self-image: on the one hand, it paved the way for a conception of a modern Jewish nation, not solely defined in religious terms, but, on the other hand, it was intent upon

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 15. Shlomo Sand challenges the existence of such a universalist Jewish tradition by referring to the actual exclusiveness of certain biblical and Talmudic formulations: Shlomo Sand, *How I Stopped Being a Jew* (London/New York: Verso, 2014), 65-76.

¹⁴⁵ Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," in *Perceptions of Jewish History*, ed. Amos Funkenstein (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), 20.

¹⁴⁶ Penslar, *Shylock's Children*, 134-5. In a related manner, Hannah Arendt interpreted the Jewish tendency to "utopianism" as a result of the Jew's lack of social roots: Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (1944): 105.

¹⁴⁷ Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 45. Hannah Arendt would later echo and expand these views by adding that the ultimate victimisation of Jews in the Shoah did not absolve them from their co-responsibility for the world's wellbeing: Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 5-6; Feldman, "Introduction," xlv.

¹⁴⁸ Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, 146.

¹⁴⁹ Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 102. Yotam Hotam sees Zionism as "modern Jewish gnosis", therewith secularising the ancient Jewish wish of a return to Zion, and turning it into a form of modern nationalism: Yotam Hotam, *Modern Gnosis and Zionism: The Crisis of Culture, Life Philosophy and Jewish National Thought* (London/New York: Routledge, 2013), esp. 92-198.

reiterating how Jews were loyal subjects in the Diaspora.¹⁵⁰ This preoccupation with underlining the Jews' loyalty to their gentile rulers was to remain a topic for the Territorialists as well. Especially during the ITO-days, Zangwill and his cohort attached great value to showing the potential benefits the colonial powers could gain from creating a Jewish satellite in one of their overseas possessions.

Theme 4: Place, Space, Science and Agriculture

Imagining a nationalism that does not necessarily have "place" at its centre is counterintuitive to the contemporary, post-war understanding of nationalism as oriented towards a specific territory.¹⁵¹ Alternative interpretations of Jewish peoplehood, such as the one proposed by Territorialism, challenge and problematise the more comfortable one-directional Zionist narrative, by "reterritorializ[ing] space and place in prevailing conceptions of Jewish nationalism",¹⁵² while also ascribing new meanings to "territory" itself.

Indeed, Territorialism did not offer Zionism's "ethnoscape" in the form of a collective memory connected to the Holy Land.¹⁵³ Nonetheless, during the interwar period, most European Jews were uninterested in going to Palestine. Most of those who wanted to leave (Eastern) Europe would have preferred to go to the United States. However, the U.S. immigration restrictions that became effective as of the early 1920s severely limited the options for those America-bound.¹⁵⁴ The growing predominance of both a general investment in (agricultural) settler ideologies and the popularisation of a more Jewish-focused *halutz* (settler) ideology is also one of the contexts in which one should place the emergence of the second wave of Territorialism during the 1930s.

The Territorialists termed the Zionists utopians, dreamers, imagining some future in Palestine that had no relationship with actual events and realities on the ground. They themselves were pragmatists who only wished to develop their projects in geographical locations where success was likely to be achieved. At the same time, Territorialism was not immune to Zionist imaginings,¹⁵⁵ especially where these were based on the

¹⁵⁰ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, xxii-xxiii, 3; Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 61-2.

¹⁵¹ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, foreword.

¹⁵² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 4.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 11. Rovner refers to Anthony Smith's definition of "ethnoscape" in Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 156.

¹⁵⁴ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 116, 64.

¹⁵⁵ I disagree with Rovner, who states that the ITO's failure was in part a "failure of imagination" regarding Palestine: Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 91.

traditional Jewish longing for a spiritual place of origin. Some spoke of a “new Jerusalem” being created within Australia. When the Freeland League set foot in Surinam it repeatedly heard that the wealthy inhabitants of the previous Jewish settlement on the so-called “Jodensavanne” had considered their home a second promised land.¹⁵⁶

A dualistic or bifurcated “Jerusalem”, one version “earthly” and the other “heavenly”, had been part of Jewish traditional thought throughout the centuries of the dispersion.¹⁵⁷ Without forfeiting the heavenly or spiritual Jerusalem, according to the Territorialists, Jerusalem on earth would be where Jewish life took shape. As Simon Rawidowicz declared, it was the people who should instil a place with meaning, and not its geographical location, however holy this location may be.¹⁵⁸ With the establishment of the state of Israel, a role reversal between Jerusalem and the Diaspora took place: the former now became a real place on earth and the capital of the new Jewish state, whereas the latter came to represent all that was lost of Jewish Diaspora life in the Shoah, as well as those elements of it that might still be preserved.¹⁵⁹

Being explicitly practical and not utopian meant that Territorialism would achieve its aims through practical and modern methods. These were to be in line with contemporary trends in thinking about space and settlement. Territorialism relied on “social and demographic engineering” and “population management”.¹⁶⁰ Mark Mazower, amongst others, has shown to what extent such scientific approaches to population movements were common practice during the interwar years, and continued to be so after the Second World War. These continuities defy the notion of 1945 as a “Year Zero”, after which world political thinking essentially changed. In fact, the “huge social dislocation of the 1940s” made population transfer-thinking even more mainstream. This popularity of transfer was closely connected to, on the one hand, how even staunch British internationalists “accepted the imperial framework of world politics”, and, on the

¹⁵⁶ ‘New Jerusalem in Australia’, *Smith Weekly* (10 February 1940), YIVO RG554, Box 1, folder 4; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 192-3.; Frederik Oudschans Dentz, *De Kolonisatie Van De Portugeesch Joodsche Natie in Suriname En De Geschiedenis Van De Joden Savanne* (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1927), 35-6.

¹⁵⁷ Mann, *Space and Place*, 42-3.

¹⁵⁸ Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 75.

¹⁵⁹ Steinberg, ‘Vilno and Jerusalem’, *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 5-6.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Gatrell, “Trajectories of Population Displacement in the Aftermaths of Two World Wars,” in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3; Matthew Frank, “Reconstructing the Nation-State: Population Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-8,” in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch, Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 28.

other hand, to the extent to which a general belief in assimilation of peoples was abandoned for a more sharply racially segregated political outlook and practice.¹⁶¹

Susan Pedersen expands on this understanding of interwar humanitarianism as the merging of internationalist views with a continued belief in an imperial world system. Especially British humanitarians saw the European powers as guardians of civilisation, especially regarding the League of Nations' interwar mandates. The rhetoric these individuals used, however, became increasingly anti-colonial.¹⁶² Nonetheless, Mazower asserts, interwar internationalism was also about the maintenance of the old order through an institutionalisation of the relationships between the most powerful states. The League of Nations "was the first body to marry the democratic idea of a society of nations with the reality of Great Power hegemony". Despite the seeming shift in geopolitical values and discourse that the Second World War brought about, there was a high degree of continuity of this type of internationalism into the post-war era: President Roosevelt used internationalist language to "sell" American world leadership.¹⁶³ As we will see, the Territorialists and especially Steinberg also combined these extremes of internationalism and anti-colonial discourse on the one hand, and imperial thinking on the other. Although increasingly critical of the treatment of marginalised peoples—not in the last place in Palestine—they relied on existing colonial power structures to realise their goals.

Taking the 1927 World Population Conference in Geneva as her point of departure, Alison Bashford explores the meaning of "space" in the interwar years. During this period, space was just as important as sex and sexuality in defining population politics. Demography at the time was to a large extent an imperial science and was less focused on population growth due to birth and death rate developments than on the (forced)

¹⁶¹ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 32-4, 13, 17; Mark Mazower, "Reconstruction: The Historiographical Issues," in *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949*, eds. Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch, David Feldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20-4. Antonio Ferrara adds that "[f]orced migrations were a hallmark of European history between the beginning of the Balkan Wars in 1912 and Stalin's death in 1953": Antonio Ferrara, "Eugene Kulisher, Joseph Schechtman and the Historiography of European Forced Migration," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, no. 4 (2011): 716. For more on "population transfer" in Zionist thinking see Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 39-64; Shabtai Tevet, *The Evolution of "Transfer" in Zionist Thinking* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Shiloah Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1989).

¹⁶² Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3, 296-7.

¹⁶³ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: the History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), xvi, 152-3, 184, 196.

movement of populations. Western policy makers' interests lay first and foremost with population redistribution, rather than with population reduction. Space, or geopolitics, was used to shape the actual make-up of life in the form of nations (in the contemporary meaning of the term) and with that to define the direction of biopolitics.¹⁶⁴

Almost two decades later, at the closing of the Second World War, geopolitics had lost none of its significance for scientists and policymakers concerned with the drafting of the post-war world order. "Geopolitics" in the 1940s was "understood as the dynamic, ever-changing interaction between political government writ large and natural geography". In the eyes of many the League of Nations had failed, but the practical, global, scientific and humanitarian approach of its technical personnel, unprecedented in size for an international organisation, would inspire the make-up of the United Nations. It was in this context of a constant negotiation between politics and (territorial) space, as well as seemingly neutral, pragmatic and scientific approaches to this negotiation, that the New Territorialists pursued their programme.¹⁶⁵

Thanks to scientific progress, especially in agriculture, certain areas in the world that before had been considered inhospitable now became more interesting for settlement projects.¹⁶⁶ The work of the Jewish Agricultural Society, which established Jewish farm communities in the state of New York, was inspirational for the Freeland League, especially after the Second World War.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, a scientific approach was more than instrumental in determining potential claims to space; it provided those claims with credible legitimisation.

The coupling of Jews and the notion of "working the land" had originated in a religiously forged connection between Jews and the soil, often explicitly situated in Palestine. Before this way of thinking became politicised, Catherine the Great had already initiated the practice of creating agricultural Jewish colonies in order to integrate Jews into the Russian social order.¹⁶⁸ Along similar lines, prominent Russian *maskil* Isaac Baer

¹⁶⁴ Alison Bashford, "Nation, Empire, Globe: The Spaces of Population Debate in the Interwar Years," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 1 (2007): 174-5, 185. Bashford deals more extensively with these and related issues in a more recent publication: Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

¹⁶⁵ Or Rosenboim, "Geopolitics and Empire: Visions of Regional World Order in the 1940s," *Modern Intellectual History* 12, no. 2 (2015): 354, Mazower, *Governing the World*, 193.

¹⁶⁶ [Unknown author] & Leo Segal, 'Productieve Loesung des Juedischen Problemes', addressed to Steinberg, Dr. Cohn and Dr. Pines, 28 September 1935, YIVO RG366/586; Steinberg to Will Lather (UK delegation to the UN), 25 November 1946, YIVO RG682/496.

¹⁶⁷ I.T.O., 'Jews and the Land', *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946).

¹⁶⁸ Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 37.

Levinsohn suggested that one third of all Russian Jews should become farmers.¹⁶⁹ Even though the interest in such projects diminished after the *Haskalah's* heyday,¹⁷⁰ a certain preoccupation with agriculture continued into the era of Jewish nationalism, heavily influenced by the writings of A.D. Gordon and Leo Tolstoy.¹⁷¹ Following Martin Buber's more mystically forged connection between Jews and agricultural settlement, Hannah Arendt held a similar, albeit entirely secular view of the value of this settlement work for the Zionist entitlement to the land, as well as the connected Jewish re-entry into history.¹⁷²

Theme 5: Colonialism

Both Zionism and Territorialism grappled with the limitations of geography, but in very different ways: Zionism was geographically limited to one location, namely Palestine, whereas for the Territorialists every location could be considered, as long as it met with realistic geographical requirements.¹⁷³ What both movements had in common was that their approach to territory was largely defined by the imperial political spaces in which they imagined their projects to materialise. For the Territorialists, these spaces were the colonial empires that they hoped would grant them a piece of land; for the early Zionists it was the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷⁴

In contrast to Zionism, the Territorialists did not aspire to achieve statehood. Therefore, empire was even more appealing to them, much like it had been to romantically inspired *maskilim* before them.¹⁷⁵ The colonial context also offered practical solutions: for the Territorialist schemes to materialise, tillable land was necessary. The conviction was that this land was only to be found within a colonial setting. As we will see, the Territorialists explored various "colonial" options. By the 1930s, the French

¹⁶⁹ Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 11-2.

¹⁷⁰ Penslar, *Shylock's Children*, 146. See also: Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 165-6.

¹⁷¹ Schwartz, "'Human Engineering'," 105.

¹⁷² Moses, "Das Römische Gespräch in a New Key," 894.

¹⁷³ This argument differs from Rovner's interpretation of the difference between Zionism and Territorialism: whereas the former was able to overcome physical and human geography through "transcendental thinking", the latter was constrained by geography and an "environmental determinism": Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 221.

¹⁷⁴ For Herzl, the Ottoman setting created a romantic dichotomy between the European Jew and his oriental surroundings. Following Shumsky's analysis of Herzl's utopian novel *Altneuland*, it was the move from Europe to Palestine that regenerated the Jew. It did not strip him of his Europeanness, but actually reinforced it by making Palestine not the final destination, but a halfway house on the way to a true Jewish existence in a conceptual Jew-friendly Europe: Shumsky, "'This Ship Is Zion!'," 472-3, 478. See also: Schwartz, "'Human Engineering'," 94.

¹⁷⁵ Litvak, *Haskalah*, 30.

Freelanders still explicitly connected to British imperialism what they considered to be at the core of Territorialism: they would not be Territorialists, “if we disregard the immense colonial possessions of the British Empire”.¹⁷⁶

This reliance on imperial structures did not only have a practical meaning: colonialism offered both an entry into modernity and a way of staying outside of it. This dual function becomes clear when considering a broader history of Jews in the post-Emancipatory age. A significant number of them were part of the colonial modernising project as colonial agents or intermediaries, but kept aloof from the framework of the modern nation-state, with its clearly defined concept of citizenship.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, Territorialism’s continued reliance on colonial structures adds to the picture of a movement that imagined a Jewish future established with highly modern means and founded on the latest trends in political thinking. At the same time, this attachment to colonialism allowed the Territorialists to steer clear from an open call for Jewish statehood, independence and citizenship, by aiming at becoming part of existing colonial settings.

Jews and colonialism in historical perspective

Since early modern times, Jews had been closely involved with colonial enterprises, especially in the slave and other trades. Jewish elites in different settings of Empire often sided with the colonial regimes rather than with the subjected populations. This was the case in European empires, like the British one, but also in other parts of the world, like for instance Morocco.¹⁷⁸

These affiliations with empire did not always benefit the Jews’ reputation, even amongst colonisers. As the (Second) South African Boer War (1899-1902) turned out to be an “ugly” and protracted guerrilla war, causing many more British losses than expected, critical voices began scapegoating English Jews by classifying the war as a “Jew-Imperialist Design”.¹⁷⁹ Abigail Green argues that, at the same time, Anglo-Jews were

¹⁷⁶ Originally: “wenn wir den immensen Kolonialbesitz des Britischen Reiches ausser Acht liessen”: Ligue Territorialiste Juive to Freeland League London, 18 May 1937, YIVO RG366/31.

¹⁷⁷ Daniel J. Schroeter, *The Sultan's Jew. Morocco and the Sephardi World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 146.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷⁹ Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman, “Between the East End and East Africa: Rethinking Images of ‘the Jew’ in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture,” in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1-3; Paul Kelemen, *The British Left and Zionism: History of a Divorce* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 11.

perceived as “useful” to the British as agents of informal empire, and especially as negotiators and middlemen in the Ottoman context, well before their official Emancipation in 1858. Because of their pragmatic value, British Jews were therefore treated more as equals by the British government than their fellow-Jews in other countries.¹⁸⁰

According to C.S. Monaco, British Jews were not just loyal servants of their state, but also became political activists, labouring on behalf of the rights of their brethren in other parts of the world. It could therefore be argued that, contrary to the more generally held belief that Jewish activism originated in the East, it was actually an Anglo-Jewish context that allowed for such a politically active role to develop first.¹⁸¹ Both this active Anglo-Jewish attitude and the preference of the state to delegate power to weaker minorities helps to explain why the important British Territorialists held a relatively positive image of the future of Diaspora life. Like many Zionists, they believed in hitching the Jewish future on the British Empire.

Zionism and Colonialism

To fully understand Territorialism’s relationship to colonialism, it is also important to analyse the Zionists’ connection to it.¹⁸² Zionist historiography has preferred to place Zionism within the historical framework of the rise of nineteenth-century nationalist movements, aiming at liberating the Jewish people.¹⁸³ The arguments these historians raise usually refer to the notion that the Zionists did not envision an imperial centre and were not planning to use local labour forces in their future state. Presner adds that

¹⁸⁰ Abigail Green, “The British Empire and the Jews: An Imperialism of Human Rights?,” *Past & Present*, no. 199 (2008): 180, 185. As Ernest Gellner asserts, in the history of nationalism, dominant groups are more prone to hand over the keys to capital to representatives of marginalised groups. Quoted in Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 18.

¹⁸¹ Monaco, *The Rise of Modern Jewish Politics*, 8. For a study of the development of Anglo-Jewish relations during the nineteenth and early twentieth century see David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

¹⁸² In recent years, a scholarly interest has arisen in the relationship between Zionism and colonialism. Mark Levene asserts that the connection between imperialism and Zionism has been made mainly from a critical, Palestinocentric point of view. Levene refers to the critique of the so-called “New Historians”, who have tried to create new accounts of Zionist and Israeli history which are not coloured by Zionist considerations. According to Levene, the New Historians might have tipped the scale a bit too far: Mark Levene, “Herzl, the Scramble, and a Meeting That Never Happened: Revisiting the Notion of an African Zion,” in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 203-4. For an earlier, influential critique of Israel, based on colonial arguments, see Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (New York: Monad Press, 1973).

¹⁸³ See for example Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 15.

although colonialism formed an important element in Zionist thinking, the Zionist colonial mission was not driven by “unchecked imperial ambitions”. There was no existing Jewish nation state, acting as the colonial metropole. In this case, it was the subaltern who became the coloniser of “the land” to which it had an “ethnic-national connection”.¹⁸⁴

Mark Levene has fewer reservations in univocally classifying both Zionism and Territorialism as part of colonial history. After all, an African Zion at the time that it was considered was not the weird, extreme and irrational idea later Zionist historians have made it to be. As we shall see, it perfectly fit the dominant *Zeitgeist*.¹⁸⁵ Ilan Pappé and Gershon Shafir have critiqued Zionism by viewing the creation of the State of Israel in colonial terms. This colonialism was perhaps not based on the exploitation of indigenous labour forces, but, they argue, it was certainly about dispossession.¹⁸⁶ In addition, Gabriel Piterberg’s sees the Zionist project as a “settler colonial” endeavour.¹⁸⁷ Derek Penslar takes a position that incorporates all of these approaches to Zionism and colonialism while at the same time attempting to depolarise the debate: according to him, the Zionist project had—and still has—colonial, anti-colonial and post-colonial elements.¹⁸⁸

The Zionist protagonists themselves did not overlook the colonial aspect of Zionism. In his novel *Altneuland*, Herzl embraced a utopian colonial approach to the Jewish future.¹⁸⁹ Zangwill, while still being a core member of the Zionist Movement, wrote in his

¹⁸⁴ Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 155-6, 159, 161.

¹⁸⁵ Bar-Yosef and Valman, “Between the East End and East Africa,” 22-3.

¹⁸⁶ Ilan Pappé, “Zionism as Colonialism: A Comparative View of Diluted Colonialism in Asia and Africa,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (2008); Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), esp. 8-21; Gershon Shafir, “Israeli Society: A Counterinterview,” *Israel Studies* 1, no. 2 (1996). Benny Morris argues along similar lines: Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 652-5. Avi Bareli argues that seeing Zionism solely in colonial terms is counterproductive and obstructive to a full analysis of Zionism: Avi Bareli, “The Debate About Zionism and Colonialism,” in *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right*, eds. Anita Shapira and Derek Jonathan Penslar (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), esp. 111-2.

¹⁸⁷ Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*. For a theoretical analysis of settler colonialism as a category and practice distinct from other types of colonialism see Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). For an influential study of the settler elements in Zionist thought and practice, stemming from the early New Historians’ “school”, see Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

¹⁸⁸ Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2006), ch. 5, esp. 91, 111. An earlier formulation of this argument can be found in Derek J. Penslar, “Zionism, Colonialism and Postcolonialism,” in *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right*, eds. Anita Shapira and Derek Jonathan Penslar (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 2003).

¹⁸⁹ Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 30; Gabriel Piterberg, “Theodor Herzl: From Frail Masculinity to Utopian Settler Colonization,” paper presented at the workshop ‘Jews between assimilation and

'Return to Palestine' that "[m]other-lands have always created colonies. Here colonies are to create a mother-land, or rather recreate her".¹⁹⁰ Members of the Jewish welfare organisation B'nai Brith explicitly stated that they believed Jewish immigration would only work if it suited the imperialistic ambitions of the great powers.¹⁹¹ Ahad Ha'Am deplored the colonial behaviour he witnessed amongst the Jewish settlers in Palestine during a visit in 1891. The sudden move from "slave" to "king" had "engendered in them an impulse to despotism".¹⁹²

The Territorialists initially did not envision a settler colonial project, aimed at independent colonisation, but they relied on elements of a more traditional metropole-directed arrangement. The ITO and later the Freeland League believed a clear association with one of the colonial powers to be the fastest and easiest way to attain their goals. The mutually beneficial quality of such an agreement, for both Jews and the colonial power involved, would contribute to the whole endeavour's success.¹⁹³ As we will see, especially after the Second World War, the Freeland League increasingly identified with anti-colonial causes and sentiments.

Race

For the early Herzlian Zionists and Territorialists alike, the linkage of the future Jewish state and imperial Great Britain was highly desirable. The medieval Cham-myth grouped Jews and blacks together in the same inferior category.¹⁹⁴ An active Jewish role in the colonial system would help to counter this image. It was therefore no coincidence that Herzl organised the 1900 Zionist Congress in London. England, with its relative lack of anti-Semitism,¹⁹⁵ offered the territory on which Jews could be transformed into white

nationalism in historical perspective', European University Institute, Florence, 4 May 2015. For a related, albeit slightly different reading of *Altneuland*, see Shumsky, "'This Ship Is Zion!'."

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 165.

¹⁹¹ Two pages of letter Leftwich to Mattuck, 18 February 1937, CZA A330/581. See also Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London: Penguin, 2001), 7.

¹⁹² Dowty, "Much Ado About Little," 168, 175.

¹⁹³ Settler colonials, in contrast to other colonials, intend to stay indefinitely in their new settlement: Lorenzo Veracini, "'Settler Colonialism': Career of a Concept," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 2 (2013): 315. The fact that the Territorialists intended such a permanent solution for their Jewish settlers makes the settler colonial analytical framework useful for our understanding of Territorialism. Rovner also concludes that the Territorialists were at least indebted to settler colonial practices: Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 120.

¹⁹⁴ For more on the Cham-myth, see: Hans Jansen, *Het Madagascars Plan: De Voorgenomen Deportatie van Europese Joden Naar Madagascars* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 1996), 47-50.

¹⁹⁵ Mark Levene argues that, although dominant Anglo-Jewish historiography generally denies it, in reality anti-Semitic feelings were common in England from the late Victorian period onwards: Mark Levene, "Jews,

settlers on “black” lands, instead of their current status of, at best, “white, but not quite”.¹⁹⁶

In this context, Zangwill, however “enlightened” he may have been, also thought in racial hierarchical terms¹⁹⁷ and he repeatedly mentioned the “whiteness” of the Jews, both in addresses to Jewish audiences and in his efforts to convince the British government.¹⁹⁸ “However, in the eyes of wealthy Jews in the West, Jews were already white and should not be sent off to live amongst non-white peoples. Joseph Fels, who financed some of the ITO-activities, in 1913 strongly opposed a plan for a Territorialist settlement in Honduras, “where the white race is not in the ascendancy. I am opposed to a country where there is a negro population.”¹⁹⁹

Nevertheless, until well into the twentieth century, European Jews were often seen as “black”, if not based on the colour of their skin, then through their general “otherness”. Neither Jews nor “Blacks” were considered fully human. Thinkers such as Ernest Renan claimed that Jews were not capable of having their own, fully developed culture, due to their racial composition. Their undefined position precluded them from becoming fully national.²⁰⁰ Increasingly, during this age of seemingly neutral scientific approaches and discourse, the popularity of race theory and eugenics, and a general secularisation trend, Jews were no longer defined by the non-Jewish world as a religious or political entity, but as a race. Therefore, Jews aspiring to change their status had to recreate themselves as “white”, even though from a black intellectual perspective they were already part of that category.²⁰¹

Britons, Empire: And How Things Might Be Very Different,” *Jewish Culture and History* 12, no. 1-2 (2010): 64.

¹⁹⁶ Bar-Yosef and Valman, “Between the East End and East Africa,” 6,21; Eitan Bar-Yosef, “Spying out the Land: The Zionist Expedition to East Africa, 1905,” in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 184; Levene, “Herzl, the Scramble,” 212. Presner argues that a colonial approach empowered the Jew, who had thus far been perceived as mentally and physically “weak”. The New Muscular Jew, inspired by “Muscular Christianity”, now became the bringer of civilisation. Mitchell Hart adds to this that a trend to depict the Jewish (medical) tradition as essentially healthy turned the Jew into a civiliser and coloniser, instead of the anti-Semitic Enlightenment stereotype of the Jew to be subjected and civilised: Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 10, 116, 158; Hart, *The Healthy Jew*, 10.

¹⁹⁷ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 93. Zangwill may have been more of a racial thinker than Herzl, at least according to the latter’s observations after meeting Zangwill for the first time in 1895: Almog, *Zionism and History*, 42. See also Chapter 2.

¹⁹⁸ Glover, “Imperial Zion,” 135-6, 41-2; Bar-Yosef, “Spying out the Land,” 193; Speech Leftwich at rebirth ITO on 14 February 1943 at Royal Hotel, CZA A330/13, pp. 6-8.

¹⁹⁹ Joseph Fels to T.B. Herwald, 21 October 1913, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²⁰⁰ Sander L. Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 26, 31-2.

²⁰¹ Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, 165, 171, 199, 202. Interestingly, Eli Lederhendler observes a return to particularity in our times, especially in the American-Jewish context, through the efforts of Jewish scholars

Jews themselves were not just objects of this racial thinking, but embraced and adjusted it to fit their own ideological and political needs. Todd Presner and Zohar Maor show how via people like Martin Buber “völkist” concepts of nationalism found their place within Zionist ideology. Blood, race, nation and history became central in thinking about the Jewish people and future, together with expressions of racist thinking.²⁰² This development extended beyond the Zionist realm. Central to the shaping of a new Jewish national consciousness was the way in which the Jewish “body” was valued. Sander Gilman has explored the notion of “masculinity” connected to the Jewish body, while Mitchell Hart has focused on the perception of an optimistic Jewish medical and hygienic tradition: collective Jewish health reinforced the notion of a clearly defined Jewish race and civilisation. At the same time, the fact that the Jewish “Volk” had survived for millennia proved its essential health. Following a reversed logic as compared to the standard image of the “shtetl”, it was the isolation of the ghetto and a continuous anti-Semitic selection process that had enabled Jewish health.²⁰³ John Efron shows how a similar reversal applied to race theory, mainly through the agency of Jewish race scientists. Throughout the nineteenth century, racial science was not only instrumental for anti-Semitic thinking, but could also be used as an element in the Jews’ identity-formation or regenerative ambitions.²⁰⁴

Empty Space

These colonial aspects of both Territorialism and Zionism relied on a more generally held belief in the existence of “empty spaces”, which were to be inhabited and developed by European Jews. This idea of empty lands was instrumental in thinking about movement, resettlement and exchange of populations. For the Zionists, it was useful to see Palestine as empty or at least as abandoned: an *eretz azuva* (abandoned land). Zangwill’s famous

of ethnicity, who attempt to “wrest” Jews out of the category of “whiteness”, at least in ethnic studies: Eli Lederhendler, *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880-1920: From Caste to Class* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

²⁰² Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 74-5. For Buber, blood and kinship were not necessary prerequisites for the origin of a people: Martin Buber and Asher D. Biemann, *The Martin Buber Reader: Essential Writings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 270. Zohar Maor argues that these were nonetheless elements of a larger anti-liberal völkist outlook, that focused on the creation of a *Gemeinschaft*, rooted in anti-Enlightenment materialism. According to Maor, these ways of thinking were passed on via Buber to Hans Kohn, Hugo Bergmann and Gershom Scholem, and informed the ideological underpinnings of their binationalist Brit Shalom movement: Zohar Maor, “Moderation from Right to Left: The Hidden Roots of Brit Shalom,” *Jewish Social Studies* 19, no. 2 (2013).

²⁰³ Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*; Hart, *The Healthy Jew*, a.o. 12-3, 105, 120-8.

²⁰⁴ Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 4-5, 7.

quotation regarding “a land without a people for a people without a land” is symptomatic of this conviction that Palestine, and potentially other parts of the non-Western world were wastelands, waiting for Jews to inhabit and cultivate them. As for Palestine specifically, the exile was a double one, both of the people and of the land, which had awaited the return of its true inhabitants.²⁰⁵ Such a view was not uncontested within the Zionist movement. Strikingly, Revisionist leader Jabotinsky, in his (in)famous 1923 essay ‘The Iron Wall’, defended his proposed stance regarding the Palestinian Arabs by stating that there were no uninhabited places in the world. Therefore, Jewish settlement would by definition always be partly immoral.²⁰⁶

Such moral issues had no effect on the popularity of the “empty space” thinking. The anti-imperialist sinologist and policy adviser Owen Lattimore even saw a reinforcement of the illusory image of (politically) empty colonial spaces in the advent of military air power: seen from the air, the “details” of a particular geographical space (such as its existing inhabitants and their political activities) could be easily ignored to serve an already existing “colonial mental map” of the western onlooker.²⁰⁷

Bashford sees a connection between the growing concerns about Western overpopulation that existed during the interwar years, and the perceived need to find empty spaces to solve this problem. This way of thinking also provided imperial powers with tools for legitimisation of their colonial activities during a time when critical anti-colonial voices could be increasingly heard.²⁰⁸ For the Territorialists, the preoccupation with empty spaces was not explicitly linked to matters of overpopulation until the 1950s. Still, the growing anti-Semitic pressure on European Jews to leave the continent was partly connected to a general fear of deprivation in a crowded world in which minorities like the Jews were easily scapegoated.

The western conviction was that leaving spaces “empty” was wasteful and should be counteracted.²⁰⁹ In describing these empty lands, the terms “uninhabited” and

²⁰⁵ Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 65, 94. Diana Muir has shown that not Zangwill, but nineteenth century Christian writers originally coined the “Land without a People”-phrase: Diana Muir, “A Land without a People for a People without a Land,” *Middle East Quarterly*, (Spring 2008). Zangwill himself ascribed the quotation to Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885): Alroey, “Mesopotamia,” 930.

²⁰⁶ Vladimir Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall,” *Razsviet* (1923). On Jabotinsky’s supposed negative stance towards forced population exchanges see Teveth, *The Evolution*, 15, 17-8.

²⁰⁷ Rosenboim, “Geopolitics and Empire,” 367-8.

²⁰⁸ Bashford, “Nation, Empire, Globe,” 192.

²⁰⁹ This way of thinking went back to the seventeenth and eighteenth century political conviction, itself based on Roman law, that land may be rightfully occupied if it can be considered in a “state of nature” and therefore *terra nullius*: empty and uncultivated: Carole Pateman, “The Settler Contract,” in *Contract and*

“sparsely populated” were used interchangeably, even though they clearly carried significantly different meanings. The Territorialists fit this picture perfectly, as they too overlooked the presence of indigenous peoples when selecting their potential Territorialist locations. Perhaps the original inhabitants of remote areas were easier to ignore due to the prevalent idea that the right to land was connected to the ability to cultivate it to western standards.²¹⁰

Theme 6: Territorialism and Zionism

David Vital juxtaposes Zionism and Territorialism as two ideologically opposing schools of thought, the former focusing on Jews as a collective, the latter on Jews as individuals.²¹¹ Zionism became engaged with finding a solution for Judaism and Jewish culture, the only possible place for which was Palestine.²¹² The end goal, the Jewish state in Palestine, overrode all other considerations, however pressing these matters may have been. Zionism was not a rescue operation and Palestine not an imminent refuge. Gradualism was considered beneficial to the Zionist cause and therefore Territorialism had to be actively combatted.²¹³ Territorialism, by contrast, aimed to rescue Jews as individuals, no matter where and no matter whether the Jews in question actively supported Zionism or Territorialism. The Territorialist goal thus did not carry the symbolic significance the Zionist claim to a “historic right” did.²¹⁴

Domination, eds. Carole Pateman and Charles W. Mills (Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2007), 35-6. Pateman argues that the *terra nullius* presupposition is an important prerequisite for a “settler contract” that legitimises the settlers’ claim to land: Pateman, “The Settler Contract,” 56.

²¹⁰ Bashford, “Nation, Empire, Globe,” 193, 195-6. Even Martin Buber wrote of a “right [to land: Palestine] deriving from creation and fertilization”, although not an exclusive right, but one to be shared with the Arab Palestinians: Buber and Biemann, *The Martin Buber Reader*, 282.

²¹¹ David Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1982), 351.; David Vital, “The Afflictions of the Jews and the Afflictions of Zionism: The Meaning and Consequences of the “Uganda” Controversy,” in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York/London: New York University Press, 1996), 120. See also Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 257.

²¹² Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, 357-8.; Vital, “The Afflictions of the Jews”, 127-30.

²¹³ Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, 358-9, 62, 430; Vital, “The Afflictions of the Jews”, 119-20. See also Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 263-4; Gur Alroey, “Journey to New Palestine: The Zionist Expedition to East Africa and the Aftermath of the Uganda Debate,” *Jewish Culture and History* 10, no. 1 (2008): 48.

²¹⁴ Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, 349, 434, 355, 431, 38; Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 414; Wohlgelehter, *Israel Zangwill*, 168. For an analysis of the notion of a return of the Jewish people to Palestine, based on this “historic right”-argument, see chapter 7 in “From Jewish Messianism to the Law of Return. Antiquity to Modernity” in Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 155-188. See also Almog, *Zionism and History*, 248-253. Martin Buber, a prominent albeit non-mainstream Zionist thinker, did not believe in a “historic right” to Palestine either. Instead, to him the Jewish claim to Palestine carried a sacred moral responsibility: Buber and Biemann, *The Martin Buber Reader*, 282-4.

Despite these differences between the two movements, Territorialism could be seen as the most “Herzlian” (meaning political and diplomatic) form of Zionism. However, once the Territorialists were organised as a separate organisation they quickly came under attack by the Zionists, who saw the Territorialist activities as a direct threat to their own agenda. Conversely, feelings of animosity towards the Zionists reigned amongst the Territorialists. This adversity notwithstanding, people crossed over from the Zionist Movement to the Territorialists and vice versa. Some even saw no problem in perceiving of themselves as both Zionist and Territorialist.²¹⁵

At the end of the day, the Territorialists could not compete with the growing influence of the Zionists, who determined not only the course of history, but also largely shaped the recording of this history. Until the present day, Territorialism is more often than not entirely omitted from Zionist historiography, perhaps, as Mark Levene states, out of a feeling of shame that “Uganda” was ever considered.²¹⁶ Nonetheless, even though one of the aims of this thesis is to write an account of Territorialist history that can exist independently from the Zionist story, the important connection that existed between the two movements cannot be denied.

Zionism revisited

This connection becomes clear when we critically assess the meaning of Zionism itself. As mentioned, there were different strands of thought even within Zionist ideology, with clear resemblances to, and cross-overs with other national movements and ideologies. Both Zionism and Territorialism were territorially focused and believed in a Jewish spiritual renaissance through mass settlement, physical labour, as well as what was considered the main Jewish language: Yiddish for the Territorialists, Hebrew for the Zionists.²¹⁷

Moreover, even though the abolishment of Diaspora existence was one of Zionism’s main aims, in practice, Zionists were active on behalf of Diaspora life. Even “hard-core” Zionists like David Ben-Gurion, Berl Katznelson and Vladimir Jabotinsky, products of the multicultural setting of the Russian Empire, clung to autonomist or

²¹⁵ Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 89.

²¹⁶ Levene, “Herzl, the Scramble,” 202.

²¹⁷ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 4-5.

multinational ideals.²¹⁸ In 1917, Zionist Ber Borochov, who had opposed the Uganda proposal in 1905,²¹⁹ collaborated with Elias Tcherikower. Together they wrote a pamphlet in which national autonomy was demanded not only in Palestine, but also in the Diaspora.²²⁰

Shumsky argues that even during the interwar period the nation-state paradigm in which the territorial-political and national elements are congruent was not yet an established idea.²²¹ Noam Pianko underlines this point, and refers to the theories of sociologist Rogers Brubaker, who argues for a distinguishing between what he calls “state-framed” and “counterstate” typologies of nationalism and nationality.²²² When focusing on Zionism, Shumsky rejects the traditional approach that contrasts political or Herzlian, and cultural Zionism.²²³ Shumsky suggests a more detailed and complex understanding of the “various degrees of autonomist Zionism as they arose out of a general interpretation of the principle of national self-determination”. In this way, alternative approaches to Jewish nationalism, like that of the binationalist Zionist movement Brit Shalom (1925-1931), and the Jewish Autonomists in Europe, cannot be easily classified as simply a-political, a-national and utopian.²²⁴

Several other studies have focused on examples of influential individuals that challenge a strict definition of Zionism. In his analysis of Oscar Janowsky’s United States-based Diaspora Nationalism, James Loeffler argues that Janowsky (1900-1993) tried to bridge the divide in modern Jewish political thought between nationalism—and more specifically Zionism—and the more liberal western aim of strengthening cultural and political activity in the Diaspora. He differentiated between the desired rights of Western

²¹⁸ Dmitry Shumsky, "Brith Shalom's Uniqueness Reconsidered: Hans Kohn and Autonomist Zionism," *Jewish History* 25 (2011): 339-353.

²¹⁹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 62.

²²⁰ Karlip, "At the Crossroads," 172.

²²¹ Shumsky, "Brith Shalom's Uniqueness Reconsidered," 340-1. Zohar Maor nuances this statement with his assertion that statism was very much a clearly defined concept, against which Brit Shalom-members Kohn, Bergmann and Scholem, following Buber, rebelled. Their anti-statism was inspired by völkist sentiments that rejected the state as an Enlightenment product. Instead, they preferred to formulate their attachment to the land as a responsibility for this land, on which they wanted to create an inclusive *Gemeinschaft*: Maor, "Moderation," 81-2, 94, 99.

²²² Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*, 13-14.

²²³ See for example Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 63. Shimoni adds a third category: “practical Zionism”: Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1995), 85-6.

²²⁴ Shumsky, "Brith Shalom's Uniqueness Reconsidered," 347-8.

and Eastern Jews: in the West, a more limited Diaspora autonomy was sufficient, while for the Jews of Eastern Europe a statist solution was a necessary addition.²²⁵

Stefan Vogt's study of the *Jüdische Rundschau*-editor and Brit Shalom-member Robert Weltsch forms another example of a recent study of a heterodox, non-mainstream Zionist. Weltsch, whose articles were reprinted by the Freeland League,²²⁶ cherished romantically inspired "völkist" ideals. At the same time, contrary to mainstream Zionism, Weltsch aimed for Jewish nationalism to gain supra-national, universal significance.²²⁷ He therefore strongly opposed the militarism amongst Zionists, especially in their dealing with the British in Palestine.²²⁸

David Myers' analyses the life and work of Simon Rawidowicz (1897-1957), another Zionist with whom the Territorialists identified. Like in Weltsch's case, they even republished Rawidowicz' articles in their periodicals.²²⁹ In contrast to mainstream Zionist opinion, Rawidowicz did not deny the value of Diaspora life. On the contrary, he regarded it as a source of great cultural vitality, and the existence of both a Jewish state and a Jewish exilic community was highly compatible and desirable. Reminiscent of Ahad Ha'Am's ideas, Rawidowicz' ideal was the existence of one nation with two centres. Palestine by itself, he argued, should not be treated as a "blessing goat" or the "shaliach" (agent, from the religious legal principle of "shelichut" or agency) for all things Jewish. The Jews of the world should not project all their Jewishness onto this one geographical location, but each and every one of them should be Jewish in and for him- or herself. Therefore, an investment in all Jewish places and communities in the world was necessary.²³⁰

²²⁵ James Loeffler, "Between Zionism and Liberalism: Oscar Janowsky and Diaspora Nationalism in America," *AJS Review* 34, no. 2 (2010): 307, 290-5, 303.

²²⁶ Robert Weltsch, "The Yishuv Seeks No War" [translated and reprinted from *Amudim*, 5 October 1945], *Freeland* 2, no. 1 (February 1946): 10-11; Robert Weltsch, "What I Would Say To Nasser Of Egypt" [reprinted from *Haaretz*, 1 June 1956], *Freeland* 9, no. 3 (June-July-August 1956): 4-6.

²²⁷ Stefan Vogt, "Robert Weltsch and the Paradoxes of Anti-Nationalist Nationalism," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 16, no. 3 (2010): 85-115.

²²⁸ Robert Weltsch, "The Yishuv Seeks No War" [translated and reprinted from *Amudim*, 5 October 1945], *Freeland* 2, no. 1 (February 1946): 10-11.

²²⁹ David N. Myers, *Between Jew & Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2008); Simon Rawidowicz, "I Am Not My Messenger" (1936), translated by William Margolies, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 13-14, 17.

²³⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, "I Am Not My Messenger" (1936), translated by William Margolies, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 13-14, 17.

The Arab Question

Despite—or perhaps because of—his Zionist convictions, Rawidowicz, in an unpublished chapter for his 1957 *Babylon and Jerusalem*, expressly linked the Arab Question in Israel to the fate of the Jewish communities living in the Diaspora. The way the Israelis dealt with their Palestinian population could negatively influence the way the world was to deal with its Jewish minorities. Moreover, based on their own centuries-long experience, the Jews should have the good moral sense not to discriminate against minorities within their own borders. Israel should not be a country like all others, with the same lack of morality that plagued other polities.²³¹ The Territorialists shared Rawidowicz' objections to the way the Zionists dealt with the Palestinian Arabs. A more broadly defined "Arab Question" was a recurrent theme in Territorialist publications. The Freelanders either saw the Palestinian Arabs as a danger that could not realistically be overcome, or, as time progressed, as a group with its own rights and entitlements, overlooked by the Zionists; this behaviour made Zionism morally questionable.

Gabriel Piterberg has shown how, by contrast, leading modern scholars of Zionism like Anita Shapira have divorced the presence of indigenous people in Palestine from the biblically inspired narrative of the return to the land that underlies the Zionist project. This return narrative of necessity meant the negation of an Arab Palestine.²³² Piterberg argues that this approach is best understood by analysing it within a settler colonial framework based on a Zionist foundational myth with three main manifestations: the negation of exile (which we encountered before as the project of *shelilat hagalut*), the return to the Land of Israel, and the Jewish return to history.²³³

Even if the Zionists did not exactly deny the presence of the Arabs, Piterberg argues, they did disregard the Arabs' embeddedness in their own history. This history and the

²³¹ Myers, *Between Jew & Arab*, 1-19.

²³² Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 203, 207. Admittedly, Shapira does acknowledge that "[t]he Jews did not *return* [italics are mine] to an empty land." She even nuances her analysis by using both "flight" and "expulsion" to describe the departure of the Palestinians in 1948. But, she adds, "it [Palestine] was a land that was relatively sparsely populated". In Shapira's account the Jewish *return* was by definition rightful. Yes, there were Palestinians, but they were the ones who were not willing to share. In fact, Shapira argues, the young, but strong Israeli state should be commended for not having committed genocide. This argument is at the very least remarkable for its cynical premise that genocide is the norm when states emerge in multi-ethnic situations: Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 472, 470, 473. Shapira shows herself slightly more informed by scholarly considerations in her nonetheless fierce analytical critique of Israeli historiographical revisionism: Anita Shapira, "The Strategies of Historical Revisionism," in *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right*, eds. Anita Shapira and Derek Jonathan Penslar (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), 62-75.

²³³ Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, xiii-xiv. Applying the settler colonial framework to the State of Israel is highly contested, as Lorenzo Veracini points out: Veracini, "'Settler Colonialism'," 314.

history of the Arab population of Palestine were treated as two completely separate narratives.²³⁴ It was an orientalist impulse that enabled this bifurcation, rendering the Arab presence inconsequential to the Zionist narrative. The romanticised depictions of Arabs as authentic in the Middle Eastern context did not leave room for the actual Arab himself, nor for his national aspirations. The contrast created between the Jews and the “alien” Arabs contributed to the paradox that Jews could finally join the Western order of nation-states, by creating their own colonially inspired state in the East.²³⁵ What traditional Zionist historians like Anita Shapira fail to acknowledge, Piterberg concludes, is that the use of the Biblical narrative, and the presence and expulsion of indigenous peoples, are inseparable aspects of the same settler colonial history, as sovereignty and the victims thereof form part of the same story as well.²³⁶

Piterberg’s analysis offers valuable insights when applied to post-1948 Zionist historiography, but it requires some nuancing when considering Zionist history as such. Pre-state Zionists were not ignorant of the Arab presence. Even before 1897, voices could be heard publicly expressing an awareness of the presence of the Arab population. As we have seen, in 1891 Ahad Ha’Am explicitly warned against the problems that would arise in connection to the Arabs. He even objected to the way in which Jewish settlers dealt with the local population.²³⁷ Sixteen years later, in 1907, Yitzhak Epstein’s article ‘The Hidden Question’ also brought to the fore the existing challenges with the Palestinian Arabs.²³⁸ Rather than speaking of a negation of the Arab population, it would therefore be better to term the Zionist attitude as a “neglect” of the Arab presence. The supposed

²³⁴ Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 65, 94. Penslar challenges the dominant historiographical notion that Herzl and his circle disregarded or were unaware of the Arab presence in Palestine: Penslar, *Israel in History*, ch. 3.

²³⁵ This treatment of “Orientals” even pertained beyond Muslim Arabs to Mizrahi Jews. The Yemenite Jew became the Jewish version of the inspirational Arab, portrayed as leading a life most similar to that depicted in the Old Testament: Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, “The Zionist Return to the West and the Mizrahi Jewish Perspective,” in *Orientalism and the Jews*, eds. Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar (Waltham: 2005), 165-71.

²³⁶ Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 201, 217, 29, 56.

²³⁷ Dowty, “Much Ado About Little,” 168, 175. Despite Ahad Ha’Am’s acknowledgement of the presence of Arabs in Palestine, and despite the fact that he never used the common phrase *eret azuva* to refer to Palestine, this did not mean that he fully recognised the political problem that the Arabs would pose in due course. While taking account of their presence, Ahad Ha’Am also viewed the Arabs as backward and inferior, and he was convinced that any potential issues would be resolved by a successful settlement, conducted along the lines he himself envisioned: Dowty, “Much Ado About Little,” 156-9, 178-9.

²³⁸ Alan Dowty, “‘A Question That Outweighs All Others’: Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue,” *Israel Studies* 6, no. 1 (2001). Epstein admitted that the Territorialists were amongst the first to acknowledge the (potential) problems connected to the Arab presence in Palestine. However, although agreeing with the gist of the Territorialist argument, he marginalised the source by juxtaposing the undesirable Territorialists and “[f]aithful Zionists”: Dowty, “A Question,” 35, 35, n. 8, 39.

“emptiness” of Palestine did not reflect a belief that the land was actually empty, but it was a “political marker, a European depiction of the invisible Other”.²³⁹ By contrast, both the Territorialists and their ideological partners in Brit Shalom and Ihud [Unity] respectively explicitly acknowledged the Arab presence in Palestine as well as the need to come to a workable solution for the complicated reality on the ground.

²³⁹ Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 158. A counter narrative to this supposed neglect of the Palestinian Arabs’ presence by leading Zionists was offered in a 1989 essay published by the Moshe Dayan Center of Tel Aviv University. The author of this essay, Shabtai Teveth, aims to react to both historians and politicians on the left (the New Historians) and the right, who claimed that the idea of a forced “transfer” was ingrained in the thinking of early Zionists. Teveth argues that leading Zionists, first and foremost Ben-Gurion, were concerned with the Arab presence in a moral and practical sense, and did not believe in forced population exchanges: Teveth, *The Evolution*, esp. 2, 3-7, 8-11, 14, 31-3, 50.

Chapter 2: The Jewish Territorial Organisation (1905-1925)

Introduction

In 1905, the Seventh Zionist Congress voted against accepting Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain's offer of a piece of the British colonial territory in Kenya, mistakenly referred to as the "Uganda proposal". During the preceding months, the discussion of this proposal and the doubtful results of a partly unqualified fact-finding commission to the area had provoked severe emotional reactions: how could such a plan even be considered, when Palestine was obviously the only true home for the Jews!¹

The rejection led to the secession from the Zionist movement of some thirty members, headed by the British Zionist Israel Zangwill, to form the Jewish Territorialist Organisation (ITO).² The split was remarkable, as until then Zangwill had been one of the most prominent representatives of English Zionism. Furthermore, the famed author had been very close to Theodor Herzl, who died in 1904 without leaving behind a clear-cut answer to the question of Uganda. According to Zangwill, Herzl had been inclined to accept the proposal as an important first step on the road to Jewish political autonomy. Obviously, Herzl himself could no longer attest to this opinion and Zangwill decided to go his own direction with the ITO.³

The turmoil began in 1903. Herzl, still alive, had been lobbying with the various Great Power governments to move them to grant a part of their (colonial) territories to the Jews. Because of the historical and spiritual affiliation of the Jewish people with Palestine, this area had featured high on Herzl's wish list from the outset. Nevertheless, he did not bet everything on the same horse, but explored several options, amongst which was the area of El Arish in Egypt.⁴ This scheme did not materialise because of a shortage

¹ Gur Alroey, "Journey to New Palestine: The Zionist Expedition to East Africa and the Aftermath of the Uganda Debate," *Jewish Culture and History* 10, no. 1 (2008): 24, 37-45. For a balanced and thorough overview and analysis of the Uganda episode and its tremendous importance in relation to Zionist thought and practice see Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness* (New York/Jerusalem: St. Martin's Press/Magnes Press, 1987), 238-304.

² David Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1982), 435. Frankel considers the split symptomatic for the failure of the Jewish emigration movement to find a lasting solution for the Russian Jews who faced persecution: Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 137.

³ Amongst others: Maurice Wohlgernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 160-1.

⁴ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 109, 22; Alex Bein, *Theodor Herzl: Biographie* (Vienna: Fiba-verlag, 1934), 390-3; David Glover, "Imperial Zion: Israel Zangwill

of water and due to both internal Egyptian opposition and limited enthusiasm amongst the British colonisers. Chamberlain's subsequent offer of the Guas Ngishu Plateau in northwestern Kenya has been described as compensation for the failure of El Arish and as a way to potentially make the failed British Uganda Railway project profitable.⁵ Herzl was not naïve and might have realised this pragmatism on Chamberlain's part, but he also recognised the political importance of such a proposal from colonial power number one, Great Britain: the Zionist movement, only officially organised since 1897, was now acknowledged by one of the world's strongest powers as the political national movement of the Jews. It could therefore be argued, as the Territorialists later did, that not the Balfour Declaration, but the Uganda proposal was the first expression of international recognition on the road to Jewish statehood.⁶

Despite the proposal's significance, Herzl did not foresee the storm it would unleash amongst the Zionists themselves. The argument that the area formed part of the Rift Valley, which eventually led to Palestine, did not convince many Zionists that it was technically part of the Holy Land.⁷ The Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903 saw a dramatic clash of opposing opinions, complete with swearing, wailing, crying, walkouts and an attempt on the life of Zionist leader Max Nordau shortly thereafter. Uganda brought to the fore the already underlying tensions between different Zionist factions.⁸ In the end, after Herzl managed to calm things down, it was decided that a research commission would be sent to Africa to investigate the proposed area. A final discussion and vote were planned for the Seventh Congress in 1905. In private, Herzl told his confidants Zangwill and Nordau that he would resign as the Zionist leader after that Congress if Uganda would be rejected: his heart was with Palestine, but his head was with Africa. Herzl would not live to act on this statement: in the summer of 1904, he succumbed to persistent cardiac

and the English Origins of Territorialism," in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 132; Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman, "Between the East End and East Africa: Rethinking Images of 'the Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture," in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 21.

⁵ Alroey, "Journey to New Palestine," 29-30; Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: The Life and Works of Israel Zangwill* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 172. See also Rovner's chapter on the Uganda proposal: 'Greetings from the Promised Land: Uasin Gishu, East Africa (1903-1905)', in: Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 45-77.

⁶ Steinberg, 'The Jubilee Of An Idea', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 2-3.

⁷ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 56.

⁸ Almog, *Zionism and History*, 260.

problems at the age of forty-four.⁹

After Herzl's death, Uganda seemed much more attainable than Palestine, but "[t]he rites of return [to the Holy Land] proved stronger than political pragmatism or even the fear of ongoing pogroms". At the Seventh Congress the proposal was rejected, partly as a result of the actions against it by Menachem Ussishkin, the leader of the Russian Zionists.¹⁰ Immediately after the vote, the ITO was formed under the leadership of Israel Zangwill. Some of the former "Herzlians" followed him, such as Nachman Syrkin, who saw the Zionist fixation on Palestine as preventing the development of a Jewish liberation movement for the Jewish masses. Syrkin later stated that "all truly democratic elements in Judaism and Zionism" left the congress hall.¹¹ The ITO's formation sounded in the end of Herzl's political Zionism. It could be argued then that as of 1905, Territorialism represented Herzl's visions more than did the Zionist movement.¹²

Zangwill gained open support from notable organisations and individuals like the German Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden, Anglo-Jewish journalist Lucien Wolf,¹³ American industrialist Daniel Guggenheim, Judge Meyer Sulzberger, "father" of modern Hebrew Eliezer Ben-Yehuda,¹⁴ Yiddish writers Hillel Zeitlin¹⁵ and Sholem Aleichem, Hebrew author Yosef Chaim Brenner, and Lord Rothschild.¹⁶ In more than one instance, these were individuals whom the Zionists had failed to win over for their cause.¹⁷ Some of these people were even openly against the Zionist Movement and their support for the ITO might have been partly influenced by these anti-Zionist sentiments.

⁹ Alroey, "Journey to New Palestine," 27-8; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 59-60; Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 128-9; Steinberg, 'The Jubilee Of An Idea', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 2-3.

¹⁰ Howard Adelman and Elazar Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge: Rites and Rights in Minority Repatriation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 163.

¹¹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 81-2. On Syrkin's actions at the Seventh Zionist Congress, see Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 322-4.

¹² Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 193; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 43, 59-60, 84-5, 109-110; Gur Alroey, "Mesopotamia – 'The Promised Land': The Jewish Territorial Organization Project in the *Bilād Al-Rāfidayn* and the Question of Palestine, 1899-1917", *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 6 (2014): 912, 914-5.

¹³ For more about Lucien Wolf see Mark Levene, *War, Jews, and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹⁴ On Ben-Yehuda's early support for Territorialism, see Almog, *Zionism and History*, 275-9.

¹⁵ Almog, *Zionism and History*, 273-5.

¹⁶ Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 137; Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, 436-7. The ITO-leader also did not fail to involve his many notable literary contacts. In 1906, he published a letter about Territorialism that he had sent to a collection of famous individuals, together with their—not necessarily positive—responses. Among those offering their opinions were authors J.M. Barrie, Hall Caine, Arthur Conan Doyle and Thomas Hardy: 'Letters and the ITO', *The Fortnightly Review* (1906): 633-47, CZA A330/153.

¹⁷ Edna Nahshon and Israel Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays: Three Playscripts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 33.

Nonetheless, an affiliation with “celebrities” was not only beneficial for the ITO’s prestige, but also brought along certain financial advantages. Members of the French and British branches of the Rothschild family, after initial reservations, agreed to donate money.¹⁸ Among the others donors were the American philanthropist Joseph Fels and the German entrepreneur James Simon. However, the movement was not a charity institution: “Whatever be the motives of the participants, it should simply be run on business lines – a Syndicate for developing a territory”.¹⁹

“Itoism”²⁰ quickly gained a substantial international following. In 1909, *The Jewish World* reported an “Enthusiastic Audience of 5000” at an ITO meeting in the Leeds Coliseum.²¹ About three years later, the London branch counted 142 members. The countries represented in the ITO’s International Council were Great Britain, the United States, Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, India (!), Rumania, Russia (including current-day Poland), South Africa and Switzerland.²² In 1911 there were no less than 320 ITO branches spread over the Pale of Settlement in the Tsarist Empire,²³ and in 1914 the newly founded Hungarian branch, presumably one of the biggest at the time, had 5870 members.²⁴ Even the Jewish population of Palestine in 1903-5 favoured the creation of an “ITO-land” in another part of the world, as conditions in the Middle East were so dire.²⁵

Immediately after the ITO’s formation, Zangwill contacted British politicians with the help of his many relations in prominent Anglo-Jewish circles—connections that were at times uneasy as Zangwill was the son of an immigrant and married to a non-Jewish woman. Nonetheless, he was granted a visit with the Colonial Secretary to discuss further

¹⁸ Zangwill to Central Russian Directorate, 19 November 1906, CZA A120/60, pp. 6-7; Zangwill to Leopold de Rothschild, 16 June 1906, CZA A120/60, p. 11.

¹⁹ Zangwill to Rothschild, 2 June 1906, CZA A120/60, pp. 8-10; Zangwill to Rothschild, 1 November 1912, CZA A120/20-22. This desire to create a business scheme rather than a philanthropic endeavour was also the rationale behind several financial schemes that were developed: Samuel Schriro’s proposal for a ‘Company Scheme’, [no date], YIVO RG255, Box 1; letter to the president and council of the ITO about the Schriro proposal, [no date], YIVO RG255, Box 1. Herwald suggested creating an insurance company, the profits of which could be used for ITO purposes, so that not only wealthy Jews would contribute, but also the Jewish masses: T.B. Herwald to the President and Council of the ITO, 29 October 1913, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²⁰ ‘Itoism’, *The Jewish Chronicle* (4 April 1913): 23-26, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²¹ ‘ITO Demonstration. Enthusiastic Audience of 5,000 in Leeds Coliseum’, *The Jewish World* (18 June 1909): 9-10, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²² Lists and documents pertaining to members of the ITO, [1914], CZA A36/2.

²³ Gur Alroey, *Seeking a Homeland: The Jewish Territorial Organization (Ito) and Its Struggle with the Zionist Movement, 1905-1925*, [in Hebrew] (The Ben Gurion University of the Negev, 2011).

²⁴ Note, by [S. Ginsburg] of the Swiss Territorialists, [1914], CZA A36/3.

²⁵ See also Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 282; Alroey, “Journey to New Palestine,” 46-7.

options regarding Uganda, but it seemed that the moment for East Africa had passed. David Vital claims that the British government showed a rapid change of heart concerning the offer, making the whole scheme highly unlikely to have turned out successfully even if the Zionists had voted in favour of Uganda.²⁶ The ITO now devoted all its efforts to exploring other possible locations, preferably, but not only, in the British colonial territories.²⁷ Like the Zionists, the Territorialists did not manage to come to a clear choice between a diplomatic approach (trying to legally obtain a piece of land), and a pro-active approach (setting up large-scale immigration as fast as possible).²⁸ Zangwill wanted to have some guarantees that the chosen location would offer enough potential for growth, as he would “only plant the acorn where there is room for the oak.”²⁹ At the same time, he did not attach much value to charters and contracts. These were all just “pieces of paper” that would not automatically lead to actual results.³⁰

First options explored: Cyrenaica and Mesopotamia

Such results were to be attained through scientific investigation and practical work. To that end, in July 1907, the British Council of the ITO compiled a series of reports about possible locations that would form the basis for the ITO-work of the following years. These locations were Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, British East Africa, Canada,³¹ Mesopotamia, Nevada and Idaho, Paraguay, Rhodesia,³² Tripoli, and Cyrenaica. Later also Honduras and Mexico were considered.³³ However, the Territorialists realised

²⁶ Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, 439-42. See also David Vital, “The Afflictions of the Jews and the Afflictions of Zionism: The Meaning and Consequences of the “Uganda” Controversy,” in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York/London: New York University Press, 1996), 129; Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 131; Alroey, “Journey to New Palestine,” 46-7; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 174.

²⁷ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 178-9, 81, 83-4; Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, 442-3.

²⁸ ‘From the British Sectional Council of the ITO to the Members of the Geographical Commission’, [no date], CZA A36/8.

²⁹ Jewish Territorial Organization, *Ito Pamphlet No. 1: Manifesto and Correspondence* (London, 1905), 13.

³⁰ Zangwill to Central Russian Directorate, 30 January 1907, CZA A120/60, pp. 9-10.

³¹ ‘Canada. Report to the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organisation’, [1906/7], CZA A36/8; Meri-Jane Rochelson, “Zionism, Territorialism, Race, and Nation in the Thought and Politics of Israel Zangwill,” in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 152-3; Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 278. In 1914, Zangwill still mentioned ongoing secret negotiations concerning a settlement in Canada: Zangwill to George Holbrook Jackson, 8 April 1914, CZA A330/153.

³² ‘Rhodesia’ (ITO-leaflet), [1907], CZA A36/8; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 152.

³³ M.D. Eder, ‘Cyrenaica’, 1932, CZA A330/14; Zangwill to Rothschild, 20 November 1906, CZA A120/60, p. 14; Zangwill to Rothschild, 7 April 1906, CZA A120/60, pp. 17-18; ‘From the British Sectional Council of the ITO to the Members of the Geographical Commission’, [no date], CZA A36/8. In 1911, Zangwill also wrote about Greek Salonika, the only place in the world that already had a Jewish majority, that it would be the perfect place from which the “Jewish effort to get back to its own feet” could be coordinated. Zangwill

very soon that most of these options were unrealistic: Canada, Idaho and Nevada would not offer even a minimal form of autonomy. Australia also had an unfavourable political situation, it did not have enough Jews, and was geographically too isolated. In Africa, black labour was too cheap for the Jews to compete with, whereas in South America the catholic environment could pose threats to the safety of the Jews.³⁴ The most promising projects were those in Cyrenaica (Libya), Mesopotamia and, in 1912, Angola and Honduras.³⁵

In a 1907 letter to Max Mandelstamm, the head of the Russian branch of the ITO, Zangwill set out why both Cyrenaica and Mesopotamia were the best options of the poor possibilities left: all the good parts of the world were already in possession of other peoples, but the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire allowed for the Jews to “rise on the ruins of a declining power”.³⁶ Such a Jewish territorial renaissance in their territories would be beneficial to the Turks as well: “The great needs of Turkey being money and population, if we could supply both I believe a bargain could be struck.” The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 added to this hope that the Ottomans would be willing to negotiate.³⁷ As a result, the ITO first sent out ex-Hovevei Zion-member Nahum Slousch to explore the options on the spot. This trip was followed by a scientific expedition, financed by Joseph Fels and led by the famous explorer J.W. Gregory, who would later also be in charge of the Angola-expedition. However, Mesopotamia was eventually dismissed on the basis of an unfavourable ICA-report, although it was still discussed within ITO-circles in 1914.³⁸ Cyrenaica, like El Arish in Herzl’s days, turned out to be unfeasible because of its lack of water.³⁹ Nonetheless, previous settlement experiments with Kurds and Cretan Muslims had been attempted there, the latter more or less successfully. A larger-scale project such

would have liked to see Salonika obtaining the status of a free port: ‘Zangwill to Mr. Richards’, *The Jewish Review* (January 1911), CZA A330/153.

³⁴ ‘From the British Sectional Council of the ITO to the Members of the Geographical Commission’, [no date], CZA A36/8.

³⁵ Zangwill to Rothschild, 3 November 1907, CZA A120/60, pp. 12-13; Zangwill to Rothschild, 14 February 1908, CZA A120/60, p. 15; Jewish Territorial Organization, “Mesopotamia. Report to the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organization,” (1907).

³⁶ Zangwill to M. Mandelstamm, 21 August 1907, CZA A120/59.

³⁷ Zangwill to Rothschild, 7 April 1906, CZA A120/60, pp. 16-17; Alroey, “Mesopotamia,” 918, 920.

³⁸ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 87; Draft of letter Zangwill to ITO-colleagues, 30 June 1914, CZA A36/3. For more of Zangwill’s views on Mesopotamia see Israel Zangwill, “Be Fruitful and Multiply,” ed. Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO) (London 1909). For more on the Mesopotamia scheme see also Alroey, “Mesopotamia”.

³⁹ M.D. Eder, ‘Cyrenaica’, 1932, CZA A330/14; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 87-9. The Gregory-report was deemed potentially too pessimistic by one anonymous reviewer: D.G.H., “Report on the Work of the Commission Sent out by the Jewish Territorial Organization to Cyrenaica by J.W. Gregory [Review],” *The Geographical Journal* 34, no. 4 (1909): 445.

as the one the ITO envisioned would be an altogether different story. It was well-known that the area under consideration was not exactly “empty”. What was more, the indigenous population was “well-armed and inclined to be truculent”.⁴⁰

Angola and Honduras

Following Mesopotamia and Cyrenaica, the Angola episode forms an example of how Territorialism, like Zionism, became entangled in broader European political processes.⁴¹ Several countries considered making Angola part of their own colonial games for power. According to the British Lord Chancellor Lord Richard Haldane, a Jewish settlement in Angola could feature in the secret arrangement between Germany and England to divide the area in case of a future partition of the Portuguese colonial territory.⁴² The German-Jewish businessman James Simon, a friend of the Kaiser, had a central position in the later ITO-negotiations. In 1912, only two years before a world war was to break out between England and Germany and their allies, Zangwill wrote to Lord Rothschild that the German Foreign Office, through Simon, had expressed its wish for a rapprochement to England. As England wanted to see a solution to the Jewish problem in Russia, the Jewish settlement could become part of the negotiations. Zangwill hoped that Simon would be able to help in bypassing Portugal and publicly bringing Germany and England together.⁴³

At the same time, the ITO attempted to make use of the Portuguese fear of Anglo-German domination. By negotiating a Jewish settlement with the ITO, the Portuguese could create a buffer of white settlers in their colony against potential rival powers. Furthermore, Zangwill viewed the Portuguese willingness to grant the Jews a part of Angola a form of compensation for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1495 respectively.⁴⁴ However, conditions in Europe changed and the Portuguese interest in Jewish immigration to Angola diminished. Despite the positive conclusions of an expedition to the area, the ITO, much to Zangwill's dissatisfaction, felt it

⁴⁰ D.G.H., "Report," 444-5.

⁴¹ See also Rovner's chapter on the Angola scheme: 'Angolan Zion: Benguela Plateau (1907-1914)' in Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 79-115.

⁴² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 100-1.

⁴³ Zangwill to Rothschild, 24 October 1912, CZA A120/60, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁴ Gur Alroey, "Angolan Zion. The Jewish Territorial Organization and the Idea of a Jewish State in Western Africa, 1907-1913", *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 14, no. 2 (July 2015): 186.

had no choice but to reject the eventual offer made by the Portuguese government: it was not sufficient in terms of the political autonomy it would grant the Jewish immigrants.⁴⁵

Like Angola, Honduras was shortly considered in 1912. The young general Richard Soussman, connected to the Consulate General of the Republic of Nicaragua in New Orleans, wrote to Herwald that he had obtained a concession to bring 10,000 immigrants to Honduras. The ITO seemed mildly enthusiastic, replying that 20,000 pounds of the total 2 million needed had already been secured. The Territorialists now asked for more information. Nevertheless, they also showed reservations, as 10,000 people seemed too small a number—an objection refuted by Soussman, as he claimed to be able to obtain even larger concessions—but mainly because they perceived Central American governments as unreliable. Indeed, as it turned out, the concession was still awaiting approval of the Honduran Congress. This would not be a problem, Soussman confidently stated, as long as the ITO would make a cash deposit as a “sign of good faith”. This somewhat dodgy proposal was not the only hurdle for the Territorialists: concentrated settlement seemed out of the question, as the tracts of land would be geographically separated from one another. Nonetheless, Soussman envisioned a Jewish colony named “Palestina”, partly financed by the settlers themselves. He proudly announced that he had obtained a bank concession for the Honduran city of La Ceiba. Unfortunately for Soussman, the ITO’s interest in Honduras was never fully ignited.⁴⁶

Galveston

At the time of the negotiations about Angola and Honduras, Zangwill and the ITO became involved in yet another immigration undertaking, although this time with some tangible results. This Galveston project also highlights Territorialism’s transatlantic importance. The driving force behind the project was the wealthy Jewish-American banker Jacob H. Schiff.⁴⁷ He had concluded that Jewish immigrants to the United States did not disperse

⁴⁵ ‘Note by Hermann M. Kisch on Mr. Z’s confidential letter of October 8, 1913’, YIVO RG255, Box 1; Zangwill to Kisch, 21 October 1913, YIVO RG255, Box 1; Alroey, *Seeking a Homeland*; Alroey, “Journey to New Palestine,” 53. In 1936, when looking back on the Angolan and Honduran episodes, T.B. Herwald, perhaps too optimistically, concluded that if it had not been for the outbreak of the First World War, the proposals might have materialised: Herwald to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 June 1936, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁴⁶ Samuel Alpern to Herwald, 9 January 1912; Herwald to Alpern, 12 April 1912; Herwald to General R.I. Soussman, 8 August 1912 and 23 May 1912; Soussman to Herwald, 29 April 1912, 5 June 1912, 12 August 1912, and 28 December 1912, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁴⁷ Together with New York businessman and former diplomat Oscar Straus and others, Schiff had been active on behalf of Rumanian and Russian Jewry since the 1890s: Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others:*

across the vast North American continent, but that most of them remained in and around the big East Coast cities. There they crowded together in very poor living conditions, also negatively influencing the general opinion about Jews and Jewish immigrants. To alter this situation, Schiff decided to motivate immigrants to settle in the less populated areas of the American South-West. For this goal to be attained, the final destination of immigrants already needed to be determined before they embarked on their journey in Europe. Moreover, this journey was not to lead them to the United States via the traditional route through Ellis Island, but via the port city of Galveston, Texas. To this end, already in late 1905, Schiff approached Zangwill as his European partner.⁴⁸

At first glance, the idea behind the Galveston project seems contrary to the ambitions and ideology of the ITO. The Territorialists sought a clearly defined territory on which Jews would obtain some form of autonomy. Schiff wanted the complete opposite: the total assimilation of Jewish immigrants into American society. From the ITO's own ranks criticism arose of this "diver[sion] [of] all their [the Territorialists'] energy into a side-venture. By changing the ITO into a 'Jewish Emigration Society' they had thrown out the baby with the bath water".⁴⁹ Zangwill disagreed: "I freely admit that after Territorialism [...] America is the best solution of the Jewish question, and if the ITO should do no more than safeguard that solution it will have amply justified its brief existence."⁵⁰

Zangwill, who thus had to convince his own following of the wisdom of entering into the scheme, saw the Galveston project as a way of securing the ITO's reputation. After all, the organisation's own effective results had so far remained limited: no place of settlement for Jews had been created. Participating in the scheme would foster goodwill with big shots like Schiff, who might then one day return the favour and support the ITO. This did not mean that Zangwill completely rejected Galveston as meaningless for the Jews. In his eyes, it was not a philanthropic endeavour, but a political one: "for the first

The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938 (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 51-3.

⁴⁸ Gary Dean Best, "Jacob H. Schiff's Galveston Movement: An Experiment in Immigration Deflection, 1907-1914," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 30, no. 1 (1978): 45; Gur Alroey, "Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and Ideology in the Early Twentieth Century," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 56, no. 1 & 2 (2004): 130-3. A contemporary analysis by an unnamed Territorialist of the Galveston endeavour can be found in a hand-written journal: 'Di Teritorialisten un di emigratsiyens frage', YIVO RG255, Box 2. For an in-depth study of the scheme see Bernard Marinbach, *Galveston, Ellis Island of the West* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

⁴⁹ Marinbach, *Galveston*, 151.

⁵⁰ Quoted in: Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 185.

time a large idea is applied to the fate of the Jewish people.”⁵¹

To maintain some degree of the Territorialist ideals in the project, Zangwill attempted to push through all kinds of demands, including a certain amount of autonomy for the new Jewish arrivals. This was non-negotiable for the hard-core assimilationist Schiff, who over time grew increasingly weary with the pushy, hot-tempered Zangwill: “His hand is against everybody and, in consequence, everybody’s hand is against him.”⁵² One of the main reasons why Schiff had approached the ITO in the first place was that he did not agree with the organisation’s ideology and by involving the Territorialists in the Galveston endeavour Schiff had hoped to change their “harmful” views and make them more practical. During their cooperation, Schiff felt limited by Zangwill’s troubled relationships with other Jewish organisations, such as the wealthy and influential, but apolitical Jewish Colonisation Association and the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden, the latter also involved in the project.⁵³ The tense cooperation between Schiff and the ITO has been described as a clash between philanthropy and politics.⁵⁴ Although Zangwill’s goals were more than only political and Schiff was certainly not merely a philanthropist, the image arising from this description does reflect the central problem quite accurately.

Due to these organisational challenges, as well as to international political restrictions, the Galveston undertaking managed to resettle only about 10,000 Russian Jews between 1907 and 1914, far less than had been intended. The outbreak of the First World War brought the project to a definite end. For Schiff this meant failure, as he had planned to resettle 25,000 individuals, but Zangwill, in desperate need of a success story, presented Galveston as an accomplishment. As for the ITO as an organisation trying to save Eastern European Jews, this might have been true. For Territorialism as a movement trying to achieve a form of autonomy for Jews outside Palestine, however, the project was a failure, since, as Alroey points out, its idea expired as soon as the immigrants arrived in the U.S. and spread out across the country.⁵⁵ Zangwill wrote that he was convinced that “[c]ould we have added also the Jewish folk-life and the Jewish Sabbath [hence make it a fully Territorialist project], we should have had a rush like that of Christendom to the gold-fields”.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Zangwill to Central Russian Directorate, 19 November 1906, CZA A120/60, pp. 6-7.

⁵² Quoted in Best, “Jacob H. Schiff’s Galveston Movement,” 54, 56.

⁵³ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 184-5; Best, “Jacob H. Schiff’s Galveston Movement,” 46, 52-4.

⁵⁴ Alroey, “Galveston and Palestine,” 132-3.

⁵⁵ Best, “Jacob H. Schiff’s Galveston Movement,” 76-7, 79; Alroey, “Galveston and Palestine,” 144-5.

⁵⁶ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 276.

ITO: the end

Galveston was the last project in which Zangwill and the ITO were actively involved. The First World War left the Territorialists with little space to manoeuvre. Some scholars have argued that the issuing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 meant the definite end of the ITO-activities.⁵⁷ Alroey even claims that Balfour led to a full return of Territorialism to Zionism—a return that had always been waiting to happen, as Territorialism had remained the “alter-ego” of Zionism all along.⁵⁸ Zangwill’s first reaction to the Declaration was indeed one of joy, proving his commitment to solving the “Jewish question”, rather than to Territorialist dogmatism. As he stated somewhat arrogantly in 1923, the ITO ceased its work after 1917 to give Zionism a “fair fighting chance”.⁵⁹ However, this statement was not a sign of Zangwill’s definite admonition to Zionism, as Alroey has it.⁶⁰ On the contrary, Zangwill quickly realised the limitations of Balfour’s promise. He started lashing out at the Declaration’s celebrants, as well as at world Jewish leaders in general: in his eyes they had failed miserably in their quest to attain political rights for Jews in Palestine.⁶¹

Even though Zangwill’s total dismissal of the Balfour Declaration was not shared by all ITO-members,⁶² Balfour’s relative failure meant that the Territorialist activities needed to continue after 1917. In 1922, Mexican president Obregon offered parts of Lower California to the ITO.⁶³ Zangwill welcomed this offer as a “prima facie case for consideration”, now that the U.S. had severely restricted their immigration policies and anti-Semitism was increasingly felt throughout not only Russia, but also Poland.⁶⁴ He wrote to Wolf that he believed that the plan should be brought before the League of Nations to make it just as public as Palestine.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Wohlgeleerter, *Israel Zangwill*, 172-3; Elsie Bonita Adams, *Israel Zangwill* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), 37.

⁵⁸ Alroey, “Mesopotamia,” 912, 914, 925, 932.

⁵⁹ Israel Zangwill, “*Watchman, What of the Night?*” (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1923), 5.

⁶⁰ Alroey, “Mesopotamia,” 929.

⁶¹ Wohlgeleerter, *Israel Zangwill*, 171; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 187-8. Zangwill was in good company with his sceptical attitude towards the Balfour Declaration: American Zionist and first president of the Hebrew University Judah L. Magnes had similar reservations: Arthur A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 27.

⁶² Notes from the 55th meeting of the London Council of the ITO, 17 September 1922, Mr. H. Kisch’s comments, CZA A36/4.

⁶³ Zangwill to [American publisher] Hurwitz, 1 August 1922, CZA A330/153; Zangwill to M. Grossmann (Jewish Correspondence Bureau), 24 June 1922, CZA A330/153; Report of a speech by Zangwill, [no date], CZA A36/4.

⁶⁴ Zangwill to ITO members, 8 August 1922, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁶⁵ Zangwill to Wolf, 2 September 1922, CZA A36/4.

Even though also the Mexican plan never materialised, in January 1925, only six months before his death, Zangwill wrote: “[I]f I had any strength just now, I should want to devote it to a revival of the ITO now that the Jewish Colonization question has, despite Zionism, become more insistent than ever, and various European and American countries have perceived the value of Jewish immigration.”⁶⁶ In August 1922, Zangwill wrote to his British ITO-colleagues to ask them for their opinions on two matters: the Mexican offer and the question whether following Churchill’s recent White Paper the ITO should join the Zionist Movement.⁶⁷ As for the second question, Lucien Wolf, as a staunch assimilationist never fond of the Zionists,⁶⁸ was opposed to disbanding the ITO “[w]hile there is a shadow of a hope” that an ITO-land could still be found. The Zionists, said Wolf, were dealing with the current immigration restrictions, which allowed only 6,000 individuals per year into Palestine. They were thus not exactly offering a solution to the Jewish problem in Europe.⁶⁹ Based also upon the responses from the other ITO-members, Zangwill felt that there was a general interest in Mexico and a feeling against dissolution of the ITO. This mood was largely confirmed during a London meeting of the organisation several days later.⁷⁰

Despite this felt wish to maintain the organisation, the First World War and the Russian Revolution had scattered the different ITO branches and caused financial difficulties. Furthermore, Zangwill was growing increasingly tired and weak.⁷¹ Although he did not openly state his reservations, already in 1922 he himself held doubts as to the feasibility of the Mexican scheme.⁷² Three years later, in 1925, supportive voices were heard no longer. Zangwill had been forced to neglect his Territorialist activities for a while due to perpetual health issues. Now, he unsuccessfully tried to organise an ITO

⁶⁶ Zangwill to Gordon, 27 January 1925, CZA A330/153.

⁶⁷ Zangwill to several recipients, 8 August 1922, CZA A36\4.

⁶⁸ Shmuel Almog names as the main reasons for Wolf’s membership of the ITO his anti-Zionism, as well as a more generally held Western wish to divert Eastern European immigrants to areas outside the West: Almog, *Zionism and History*, 295-6. Although I do not contend with the fact of Wolf’s pragmatic reasoning, I disagree with Almog’s suggestion that these somewhat dubious motivations reflect on the ITO as a whole. Also, it should be noted that Wolf had been active on behalf of persecuted Rumanian Jewry as early as 1908, and continued to labour on behalf of Jewish minority rights during the 1920s: Fink, *Defending the Rights*, esp. 49-51, 283-94.

⁶⁹ Lucien Wolf to Zangwill, 21 August 1922, CZA A36/4.

⁷⁰ Zangwill to Wolf, 2 September 1922, CZA A36/4; Notes from the 55th meeting of the London Council of the ITO, 17 September 1922, CZA A36/4; T.B. Herwald to Zangwill and M. Spielmann, 17 November 1922, YIVO RG255, Box 1; J. Dulberg to Zangwill, 12 September 1922, CZA A36/4.

⁷¹ Report of a speech by Zangwill, [no date], CZA A36/4.

⁷² Zangwill to Wolf, 2 September 1922, CZA A36/4.

meeting to decide upon the movement's future.⁷³ In addition to several rejections and cancellations he received a note from A. Auerbach, who had been "under the impression that the final Meeting had been held some years ago, as it certainly seemed to me that the ITO had then achieved all that was possible."⁷⁴ And so it happened that the movement was dissolved in June 1925. Officially, the option for a future revival was kept open.⁷⁵ As one of the ITO-members had suggested, the organisation was "kept in a state of suspended animation" until circumstances would require Territorialism to rise again.⁷⁶

Israel Zangwill (1864-1926)

If the history of Territorialism is one of the hidden and untold stories of Jewish nationalism, then Israel Zangwill is without a doubt one of its main protagonists. Largely forgotten in current-day literature studies, for some time Zangwill experienced great fame as a literary figure on both sides of the Atlantic. A versatile, exotic and at the same time quintessentially Victorian gentleman, Zangwill spoke to a wide audience throughout the English-speaking world.

After a highly successful career start during the final years of the nineteenth century, Zangwill, who at the time was compared to literary giants like Tolstoy, Heinrich Heine, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, George Bernard Shaw and Rudyard Kipling, as well as being termed the "Dickens of the Ghetto",⁷⁷ abandoned literature. He now wanted to focus on his political endeavours, first as an English Zionist and later as the leader of the ITO. These two main occupations, that of writer/playwright and of Jewish political nationalist, were not completely detached from one another. In both roles, Zangwill sought to materialise a thorough idealism, directed towards the betterment of Jewish and

⁷³ Zangwill to ITO-members, 20 May 1925, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁷⁴ A. Auerbach to Zangwill, 22 May 1925, CZA A36/5.

⁷⁵ Hani A. Faris, "Israel Zangwill's Challenge to Zionism," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, no. 3 (1975): 86; M. Spielmann to Zangwill, 19 August 1922, CZA A36/4.

⁷⁶ Spielmann to [?] Meyer, 30 May 1925, CZA A36/5.

⁷⁷ Adams, *Israel Zangwill*, 20-1; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 4; Myer Jack Landa, "Israel Zangwill, the Dreamer Awake," *Contemporary Review* 130, (July/Dec. 1926): 317. After the outbreak of the First World War he was even invited to advise the British government, together with other literary figures such as H.G. Wells and Thomas Hardy: David Vital, "Zangwill and Modern Jewish Nationalism," *Modern Judaism* 4, no. 3 (1984): 243. In addition to Adams', Wohlgeleirnter's, Udelson's, Rochelson's and Nahshon's works, on which I rely extensively in this study, several other biographical studies of Zangwill have seen the light: Jacques Ben Gui Gui's biography mainly focuses on Zangwill's literary career: Jacques Ben Guigui, *Israel Zangwill: Penseur Et Ecrivain (1864-1926)* (Toulouse: R. Lion, 1975). The Hungarian-born Margit Freund defended her Ph.D. on Zangwill's thought in early 1926: Margit Freund, *Israel Zangwill's Stellung Zum Judentum* (Berlin: Druckerei Studentenwerk Berlin, 1927). In 1909, André Spire, a French poet, political activist and close contact of Zangwill, wrote a short exposé about Zangwill's literary and political work, ostensibly meant in support of the latter: André Spire, *Israël Zangwill* (Paris, 1909).

human life in general. The difference between the two phases was the means by which he tried to accomplish his goals.⁷⁸

Israel Zangwill was born in London on 21 January 1864 as the second child of Moses and Ellen Zangwill. The marriage between the thoughtful, traditional and Eastern European father and the strong, modern, English mother, may have largely shaped the “duality” his biographers discern in Zangwill. Apart from a short period outside the city, the Zangwill children grew up both inside and outside the London ghetto, an environment the future writer would later perceive as the place in which English Judaism was best preserved.⁷⁹ A particularly bright student, Zangwill worked his way up the Anglo-Jewish social ladder starting with his award-winning achievements at the Jews’ Free School in London.⁸⁰ He started publishing seriously towards the end of the 1880s in periodicals like the *Jewish Standard* and the *Jewish Quarterly Review*. In 1892, *Children of the Ghetto*, one of his most successful novels was published. This book turned Zangwill into an international celebrity. In 1898, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, a controversial collection of portraits of influential but heterodox Jews in history, followed by the 1908 play *The Melting Pot*, consolidated the writer’s literary status.

By the turn of the century, Zangwill had also earned himself a position of a certain importance in British politics, and especially in influential Anglo-Jewish milieus.⁸¹ In all his political endeavours, both Jewish and non-Jewish, the mark could be seen of his affiliation with the Fabian Society, which propagated socialist ideals while also valuing the modernising potential of an imperial world system.⁸² Zangwill was a staunch feminist, even before meeting his future wife, the suffragette Edith Ayrton, in 1901, and he began to publicly advocate suffragism in Britain in 1907.⁸³ He was often asked to comment on various other topics, often related to issues of immigration and multiculturalism. In 1924, he engaged in an indirect dialogue with Imperial Wizard Hiram W. Evans, leader of the American white supremacist Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Although he recognised a certain threat

⁷⁸ Zangwill, “Zionism and Charitable Institutions” in *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, ed. Maurice Simon (London: The Soncino press, 1937), 168; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 5-6.

⁷⁹ Adams, *Israel Zangwill*, 36-7; Wohlgeleerter, *Israel Zangwill*, 5; Israel Zangwill, “The Ghetto” [1899] in *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, ed. Maurice Simon (London: The Soncino press, 1937), 19, 27.

⁸⁰ Nahshon and Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 9; Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena: The Career of Israel Zangwill* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 10.

⁸¹ Glover, “Imperial Zion,” 134-5.

⁸² Yosef Gorni, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press, 1987), 271.

⁸³ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, xiv; Transcript of letter Zangwill in *The Times*, (7 July [1913]), CZA A330/153, Wohlgeleerter, *Israel Zangwill*, 215, 18.

the KKK posed for the position of Jews and other minorities in the United States, Zangwill did not take these men, “romping around in white sheets and masks” all too seriously.⁸⁴

Zangwill’s active involvement in Jewish nationalist politics commenced in 1895, when he met Theodor Herzl during the latter’s first official visit to England. Zangwill arranged for Herzl to speak at a meeting of the Maccabean Club, a gathering of distinguished English Jews.⁸⁵ After meeting with the charismatic Hungarian intellectual, Zangwill revealed a lukewarm enthusiasm for the Zionist cause. In 1897, he visited Palestine with the Maccabeans,⁸⁶ and he even attended the first Zionist Congress in Basel as an observer. However, the 1897 Palestine-tour increased Zangwill’s scepticism rather than that it fuelled enthusiasm for any Jewish future there. It may have even sown the seeds for his developing idea that a different territory should be found.⁸⁷ Before such ideas would manifest themselves fully, Zangwill developed a close affiliation with Herzl and at the fifth Zionist Congress in 1901 he was the British delegate.⁸⁸

The relationship between Herzl and Zangwill went from one based on mutual fascination to becoming a true professional friendship in which they addressed one another in very amicable ways. “Dear Zangwill”, Herzl wrote to the Englishman in 1896, “many thanks for your card. I shall be very glad to see you in Vienna and to make you the ‘honneurs’ of the capital of Anti-Semitism. For a few days it is a very agreeable place.”⁸⁹ Zangwill became Herzl’s man in England, and this country’s potential importance to the Zionists—perhaps the *Judenstaat* could be founded in one of Britain’s colonial possessions—quickly turned Zangwill from a sceptical observer into one of the most important Zionist leaders. Nonetheless, Zangwill’s scepticism and pragmatism remained. Partly because of this, Herzl thought very highly of Zangwill: “I now discern in the revival of our movement in England your spirit, Zangwill. I would also apply to you what [Oskar]

⁸⁴ Zangwill to his son Ayrton Zangwill, 12 February 1924, CZA A120/192, p. 5; Zangwill, ‘Is the Ku-Klux Klan Constructive or Deconstructive?’, CZA A120/94, p. 2. As a result of the public criticism Zangwill uttered against the KKK, he received a death threat that was fortunately never acted upon: *Sentinel* and *Chicago Jewish Weekly*, (11 January 1924) and ‘Zangwill Challenges Klan to Debate Its Right to Existence’ [source and date unknown], CZA A120/94, pp. 3, 10, 13.

⁸⁵ Bein, *Theodor Herzl*, 157-8; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 110-12.

⁸⁶ The Maccabean’s “pilgrimage”, organised by Herbert Bentwich, was explicitly not a Zionist endeavour, much to Herzl’s disappointment. It also did not incite much enthusiasm for Zionism amongst Anglo-Jewry: Stuart Cohen, “The First Anglo-Jewish Pilgrimage to Palestine: 1897,” *Studies in Zionism: Politics, Society, Culture* 2, no. 1 (1981): 72, 76, 79-80.

⁸⁷ Cohen, “The First Anglo-Jewish Pilgrimage,” 83-4.

⁸⁸ Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill*, 149-50; Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 157.

⁸⁹ Herzl to Zangwill, 30 March 1896, CZA A120/681, p. 3.

Marmorak says about [Max] Nordau: that for us he has the value of an army corps.”⁹⁰ This praise was not only the result of personal admiration. Herzl also felt that Zangwill, with his extensive English network, could connect him to important people like writer Rudyard Kipling, magnate Andrew Carnegie and, most importantly, businessman and politician Cecil Rhodes, who to Herzl was more important than the King and the “Lords”.⁹¹

Zangwill, like Herzl, was a pragmatic Zionist. Although he acknowledged the meaning and importance of Palestine, he was more interested in finding an immediate and politically viable, non-communist solution for the Jewish question in Eastern Europe. At the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903 he defended this line of reasoning: “The soul is greater than the soil, and the Jewish soul can create its Palestine anywhere, without necessarily losing the historic aspiration for the Holy Land.” Zangwill saw the Uganda offer, coming from his own British government, as a huge diplomatic achievement. He was bothered by what he considered irrational arguments against it, voiced by many of his fellow-Zionists during the Sixth Congress.⁹² It was therefore no surprise that, when the proposal was officially rejected two years later, Zangwill left the Zionist movement to form the ITO. According to him, both Herzl and he himself had chosen to give up Zion in order to keep Zionism alive. The majority of the movement had made the opposite decision.⁹³

Zangwill publicly voiced his objections to Palestine as the sole solution, but to no avail. In 1919, he made some remarks about the Arabs of Palestine, which caused only a small controversy in both the British and the Palestinian press. The era of Zangwill the politician seemed to have passed. Worn-out and disappointed, he tried to breathe new life into his literary career, but with only limited success. His final moment of international fame, or rather infamy, came in 1923, when he was invited to give his ‘Watchman, what of the night?’-lecture at New York’s Carnegie Hall to a meeting of the American Jewish Congress. In this speech, to which we will return later, Zangwill proclaimed political

⁹⁰ Herzl to Zangwill, [no date], CZA A120/681, p. 16. Original: “Im aufleben unserer Bewegung in England spüre ich jetzt Ihren Geist, Zangwill. Was [Oskar] Marmorek von [Max] Nordau sagte: dass er für uns den Werth eines Armeecorps habe, das möchte ich auch auf Sie anwenden.”: Herzl to Zangwill, 20 July 1901, CZA A120/681, p. 29.

⁹¹ Herzl to Zangwill, 16 June 1901, CZA A120/681, p. 31; Herzl to Zangwill, 15 October 1901, CZA A120/681, p. 27.

⁹² Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill*, 39, 159-60, 64.

⁹³ Israel Zangwill, “Territorialism as Practical Politics” (1913) in ed. Maurice Simon, *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill* (London: The Soncine Press, 1937), 311.

Zionism dead.⁹⁴

The 'Watchman'-address caused great outrage within, but also outside Zionist circles. Chaim Weizmann even went so far as to accuse Zangwill of national treason, as he had abandoned the Zionist cause.⁹⁵ Zangwill had indeed expected that the conclusion of his speech would "find me less popular than the commencement". He conceded that it was the hardest speech he had ever given.⁹⁶ Seeing the amount of openly offensive statements he had made, especially in a shorter speech at Nathan Straus' home the day after his Carnegie Hall appearance, Zangwill could have hardly been surprised at the amount of egos he had hurt: Lord Rothschild, Baron Edmond de Rothschild and Jacob Schiff had all been deaf to Zangwill's reason and the Carnegie Hall audience was the slowest he had ever encountered.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, he was unaccustomed to being attacked in such a hostile manner and therefore resorted to an aggressive mode of defence. During the remainder of his U.S. tour, he lashed out at Americans and their supposed shameless, lazy and humourless behaviour. No one, neither Jew nor Christian (adherers to "organized "hypocrisy"⁹⁸), was spared his criticism.⁹⁹

Hurt, defeated and alienated from his former important acquaintances, Zangwill returned home to England, vowing never to publicly speak about the Jewish question again.¹⁰⁰ Shortly thereafter, in 1925, he dissolved the ITO, just before experiencing a severe mental and physical breakdown, causing his hospitalisation. On 1 August 1926, at the age of sixty-two, Zangwill died in a nursing home in Midhurst, Sussex.

Modernity and Tradition

Whereas Zangwill had rather well-defined political ambitions, the ITO did not yet garner similarly clear ideas about the place of culture in the prospected "Itoland(s)". Indeed, Zangwill distinguished a strong need for the preservation of what he saw as authentic Jewish culture in Eastern Europe. This was why he envisioned different futures for the

⁹⁴ Zangwill, "Watchman", 34-6. For more on the speech see also Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 216-19; Adams, *Israel Zangwill*, 37; Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill*, 45, 151-2, 68, 73-4.

⁹⁵ Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill*, 43, 174; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 219. This bad reception may explain why the 'Watchman'-speech was not included in a 1937 collection of Zangwill's most important speeches and writings: Israel Zangwill and Maurice Simon, *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill* (London: The Soncino press, 1937).

⁹⁶ Zangwill, "Watchman", 3, 45.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 48, 50.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁹⁹ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 220.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 231.

Eastern and the Western Jewish worlds, with the Territorialist future aimed at the former.¹⁰¹ For our understanding of this early phase of Territorialism, it is therefore insightful to begin an analysis of its history through the lens of our second theme: the question of tradition and modernity and the relationship between Eastern and Western Jewry.

In practice, even during these early years, the Territorialist project could not be one-directional, aimed from the West towards the East. For organisational purposes, from the very beginning, the mainly British ITO-leadership had to cooperate with the Russian Territorialists. At times, this cooperation proved to be problematic. Influenced by Joseph Jacobs' philosemitic race theory, which advocated the primacy of "nurture" over "nature", the English ITO-leaders might have believed they had to educate the "primitive" Russian Jews. To Zangwill's discontent, these Eastern European Territorialists did not always comply with the wishes in London. "We in England" Zangwill wrote condescendingly to the Central Russian Directorate in 1906, "want to get political guarantees beforehand." And: "I would rather hear you were making new branches throughout Russia and raising money than have our time wasted arguing about a paper Constitution."¹⁰² In 1914, Zangwill still felt the Russian "friends" to be "cold and sceptical, and quite unappreciative that our last Conference was immediately followed by an expedition [to Angola]".¹⁰³

This friction and misunderstanding could be explained by cultural differences. The situation was aggravated by the language divide that influenced the correspondence: Zangwill always wrote in English, the Central Europeans used German (the Austrians) or Yiddish (the Poles) and many of the letters from the Russian Territorialists were first translated into either German or English and usually even only summarised, before they reached the ITO-leaders in London.

Still, Zangwill recognised the importance of cooperation with Central and Eastern European Territorialists. Already in 1904, he criticised other English Jews for acting like "Mendelssohnian Schutz-Juden", themselves well-protected against persecution and not really interested in creating a similar protection for their Eastern European brethren.¹⁰⁴ Also, the stakes were different in the East and in the West: whereas the Polish Jews lived

¹⁰¹ In 1903, Weizmann had already criticised the "Ugandists" for being too Western-minded: Almog, *Zionism and History*, 266.

¹⁰² Zangwill to The Central Russian Directorate, [April 1906], CZA A120/60, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰³ Zangwill to Ginsburg, 4 March 1914, CZA A36/3.

¹⁰⁴ Israel Zangwill, *The East African Question. Zionism and England's Offer* (New York: The Maccabean Publishing Company, 1904), 60-1.

in danger and might be forced out of their country, this was not the case for the English Jews. In other words, for Territorialists in the West Territorialism was a project for others, while for their Eastern colleagues the aspired-for solution would apply to themselves as well.¹⁰⁵

Despite this friction between Territorialists in Eastern and Western Europe, ideologically the movement was really a product of both East and West. This duality is discernible in Zangwill himself, an ambivalence described by Udelson as a conflict between assimilation and separation, or, more fundamentally, between Zangwill the Englishman and Zangwill the Jew.¹⁰⁶ On the one hand, as an Anglicised Jewish intellectual, Zangwill was perfectly assimilated into a society that not only accepted him as a natural part of the whole, but also generally admired his talent and artistry. He was, first and foremost, an *English* writer. On the other hand, Zangwill, partly raised in the London ghetto as the son of a pious Baltic-Jewish immigrant, was well aware of his Jewish heritage and identity. He felt himself connected to the tragic fate of his Eastern European Jewish brethren.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, it was absolutely possible for Zangwill, an assimilated English Jew, married to a non-Jewish woman, declining circumcision of his new-born son and propagating a new Judeo-Christian world religion, to be at the same time a fervent Jewish nationalist.¹⁰⁸

Throughout this study, I repeatedly argue that the Territorialist attachment to both Jewish tradition and modernity was not a contradiction, but created a compatibility that was highly modern. In that vein, Rochelson sees Zangwill as a man of his times, able to be both on the inside and on the outside of the contexts in which he was active. She describes the ambivalent approach Zangwill had to modernity: in his utopian visions, he was working towards a new world order, brought about by a Jewish vanguard, while simultaneously wanting to preserve the old and the traditional.¹⁰⁹ Rochelson considers this duality, and the imperial framework in which Zangwill envisioned the Jewish future, signs of his inability to face the challenges of modernity. I argue the exact opposite: this negotiation between elements of tradition and modernity made Zangwill's vision truly modern.

¹⁰⁵ In 1905, Zangwill still exceptionally expressed his belief that it might even be attractive for English middle-class Jews to move to the future Jewish colony: Jewish Territorial Organization, *Ito Pamphlet No. 1*, 7-8, 12.

¹⁰⁶ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 2-3, 5-6, 119, 148-52; Adams, *Israel Zangwill*, 24.

¹⁰⁷ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 59-65.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 153, 158-9, 161, 163, 166-7; Wohlgelehrter, *Israel Zangwill*, 11, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 5-6. Emphasis in original.

This dual approach and insider-outsider perspective makes Zangwill a prime example of Hannah Arendt's Jewish "conscious pariah". According to Arendt, a Jewish pariah in the twentieth century, often isolated from his fellow-pariahs, had no choice but to become political.¹¹⁰ Zangwill's outsider-position partly originated from his complicated relationship to Jewish religion. He was not a traditional Jew and his personal choices were not always appreciated by the Jewish milieu he was closely affiliated with. Although it was not uncommon to intermarry—the leading Zionist Max Nordau did the same—his friend and soon to be conservative Jewish leader, Solomon Schechter, broke off contact when Zangwill married the non-Jewish Edith Ayrton in 1903.¹¹¹

Zangwill's own non-Jewish lifestyle notwithstanding, according to him, religious considerations could have a place in Territorialist ideology and practice. He used biblically inspired arguments to justify Mesopotamia as a suitable place for Jewish settlement.¹¹² Even though this reliance on religious discourse had the clear pragmatic aim of "selling" Mesopotamia as a valid alternative to Palestine, the fact that Zangwill decided to rely on such rhetoric signals that he did not reject religion as an important factor in Jewish life.

The connection between Territorialism and religion already started in 1905, when Reines and his religious Mizrahi faction supported the Uganda-proposal based on pragmatic considerations: however preferable Palestine was in the long run, it was not an attainable option at that moment, whereas Uganda could immediately alleviate the plight of the persecuted Russian Jews. Moreover, creating a clear division between a religious attachment to Palestine and a *Realpolitiker* approach to the Jewish problem suited the Mizrahi party's convictions.¹¹³

Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (1944): 101, 107-10. Also quoted in Jerome Kohn, "Preface: A Jewish Life: 1906-1975," in *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), xxviii; Ron H. Feldman, "Introduction: The Jew as Pariah: The Case of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975)," in *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), xliii, lvi.

¹¹¹ Sander L. Gilman, *Multiculturalism and the Jews* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 78-9.

¹¹² Alroey, "Mesopotamia," 922.

¹¹³ Yosef Salmon, *Religion and Zionism: First Encounters* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2002), xxvi; Almog, *Zionism and History*, 279-81; Jess Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish Modernity: Architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 263. According to Shlomo Avineri, a Zionist religious-national philosophy was only truly developed after Uganda by Rabbi Abraham Isaac (or just: Rav) Kook (1865-1935). However, on moral grounds Rav Kook opposed a Jewish state that would be like all other states, as such a state would be nothing but a "wolf among wolves" and would not be able to usher in redemption: Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 188, 195-6.

Zangwill believed that the religiosity and spirituality of Judaism would preserve Jewish life.¹¹⁴ In an attack on American Judaism as being nothing more than a collection of “secular clubs”, he quoted Moses Mendelssohn’s statement that Judaism is larger than the land and that its future realm must be that of spiritual conquest.¹¹⁵ Indeed, Zangwill appreciated the core Jewish values he discerned in Eastern European traditional Judaism, but did not want to maintain its purely religious features: for Zangwill, “Jewishness” was more important than Judaism.¹¹⁶ Religion itself was not enough to ensure the future of the Jewish people, and he anyway believed that Jewish religious unity was already hollowed out to the point that it “now consists more in our non-Christianity than in anything else.”¹¹⁷ However, Zangwill concluded that not only Jewish religious tradition, but also the Jewish way of life was disappearing, partly as a result of persecutions and pogroms, and partly under the influence of the assimilated West. Although Zangwill himself adhered to western values, he did not believe they would be beneficial to Judaism as a whole.¹¹⁸

Therefore, a different approach to, and evaluation of Jewish religion was necessary. It had been the Jewish religion that had held together the Jewish nation, but it had left it merely “the broken and defeated remains of a nation”. Only a territory of their own, with their own laws and economic systems could save the Jews.¹¹⁹ It was impossible to maintain a national church for a religion that had been thoroughly “denationalized”. In order for the Jews to remain a people and to execute their task as a light unto the nations, they had to become nationally united themselves: “only a nation can show an example to the nations. Become a nation, and then show your example.”¹²⁰

Zangwill combined such idealism with practical thinking. As in Judaism “all is religion [by which Zangwill did not mean rigid religious dogma’s, but the whole of Jewish tradition], and religion is all,” extra care for religious preservation or even religious revival was important. However, he did not see how observant Judaism would survive

¹¹⁴ Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman (Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel Philadelphia), ‘Israel Zangwill and American Israel’, 9 December 1923, CZA A120/93, p. 28.

¹¹⁵ Zangwill, ‘Zionism -Past and Present’ [incomplete], [no date], CZA A120/130, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Arie M. Dubnov, “‘True Art Makes for the Integration of the Race:’ Israel Zangwill and the Varieties of the Jewish Normalization Discourse in Fin De Siècle Britain,” in *New Directions in Anglo-Jewish History*, ed. Geoffrey Alderman (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 106-7.

¹¹⁷ Vital, “Zangwill,” 249; Zangwill to Abraham S. Schomer, 14 August 1907, CZA A330/153.

¹¹⁸ Dubnov, “True Art,” 105-6.

¹¹⁹ Zangwill to Abraham S. Schomer, 14 August 1907, CZA A330/153; ‘The Jewish Territorial Organisation. Branch Aam Israel’, fly-leaf no. 2, [no date], CZA A36/8.

¹²⁰ Israel Zangwill, “Mr. Lucien Wolf on “the Zionist Peril”,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 17, no. 3 (1905): 403-4, 422.

under educated Western Jews, but he believed it could be salvaged in the East.¹²¹ By extension, on the one hand, his Jewish political movement was meant as “an instrument of theological rejuvenation” in the East, while on the other hand, for a Western audience Zangwill tried to justify this movement “time and again merely as a pragmatic solution for a refugee crisis, divorced from the “metaphysical” subtexts which inflame the hearts of the masses”.¹²²

Nonetheless, the Jews in the West were not safe either. According to Zangwill, their emancipation would eventually lead to their degeneration.¹²³ As early as 1905, while still officially a Zionist, he wrote: “assimilation is evaporation, the [Moses] Mendelssohnian solution is *dissolution*. [...] The Jews are an evaporating people.”¹²⁴ By 1919, the ITO leader even saw assimilated Western Jewry as “a living corpse”, “a body without its soul”.¹²⁵

Diaspora

In his 1908 play *The Melting Pot* Zangwill had already signalled the problems of Jewish assimilation. The play describes the process that created American multi-cultural society, the “great synthesis”, or, as Zangwill phrased it himself, “the process of American amalgamation [that] is not assimilation or simple surrender to the dominant type, as is popularly supposed, but an all-round give-and-take by which the final type may be enriched or impoverished”.¹²⁶ With this work, Zangwill supported the notion that the European Jews, after their failed Enlightenment project, could lead a new and healthy life in both Europe, the United States and possibly even other sites in the world.¹²⁷ The resonance of the melting pot-label was so strong that it even survived into the twenty-

¹²¹ Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 156-7; Faris, “Israel Zangwill's Challenge”: 79.

¹²² Dubnov, “True Art,” 125.

¹²³ Israel Zangwill, *The Problem of the Jewish Race* (New York: Judaeon Publishing Company, 1912), 20; Faris, “Israel Zangwill's Challenge”: 79.

¹²⁴ Zangwill, “Mr. Lucien Wolf,” 404, 410, 411.

¹²⁵ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 263.

¹²⁶ Eli Lederhendler, “Rereading the Americanization Narratives of Antin, Zangwill and Cahan, Imagining and Unimagining the Jewish Community,” in *Imagining the American Jewish Community*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Waltham/Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2007), 256; Nahshon and Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 213.

¹²⁷ Gilman, *Multiculturalism and the Jews*, 82.

first century, although with a slightly altered meaning and completely divorced in the collective memory from its intellectual father.¹²⁸

The Melting Pot illustrates how much Zangwill valued the Diaspora; he deplored the Zionist aspiration to have Palestine supplant it: “It is the Diaspora that will keep Palestine Jewish, rather than Palestine the Diaspora.” The Jewish exilic communities would not disappear overnight, as “the Diaspora is indestructible, except by centuries of absorption into the various national melting pots, and the heat of the solution can be provided only by “Christian love,” which is rarer than radium”. The Jews had learnt to live without a country of their own, making them “like loose water [...], unconquerable and immortal”.¹²⁹ As the coming about of an Itoland might take a long time, the continuation of Diaspora life was of crucial importance. Some Territorialists, even in the U.K., explicitly acknowledged the centrality of the Yiddish language in this respect.¹³⁰

But the Jewish dispersion also faced severe danger: whereas the Zionists wanted to eliminate the Diaspora, its “euthanasia [...] could [also] be sought [...] from complete indifference to Jewish affairs”.¹³¹ Having no land of their own for centuries had robbed the Jews as a people of their peoplehood and had made them like sick beggars. The moment of choice had come: the Jewish people had to be either “mended or ended”. The ITO-solution would mend the Jewishness of those who chose to emigrate; the others could then freely choose to end theirs in the Diaspora—and end it would: even if the Jewish religion had a future in the United States, the Jewish people, without an autonomous territory of its own, had none:¹³² “America will save the Jew economically, but not as a political entity.”¹³³

Nonetheless, the *galut*’s fate was not entirely sealed, and Zangwill therefore denied any threat the future Jewish state or a Territorialist settlement would pose for those remaining in the Diaspora. Moreover, as “[i]n the modern world citizenship is optional”, nations would not doubt the loyalties of their Jewish inhabitants who chose to

¹²⁸ Simon Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 156; Wohlgeleirter, *Israel Zangwill*, 267; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 76-8, 211.

¹²⁹ Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 84.

¹³⁰ Agenda Manchester ‘British ITO Federation’ conference 8 December 1907, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹³¹ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 267.

¹³² Zangwill, “Be Fruitful and Multiply,” 2-3, 4, 6. Already in 1909, Zangwill’s friend and collaborator André Spire used the term “regeneration” to describe Zangwill’s aims: “Zangwill essaye de régénérer son peuple.”: Spire, *Israël Zangwill*, 78.

¹³³ Zangwill to Mandelstamm, 21 August 1907, CZA A120/59, p. 2.

live within their borders voluntarily.¹³⁴ Such statements were important, as the dispersed Jewish communities of the world formed the core of the Territorialists' support base. In fact, on more than one occasion in both the ITO- and Freeland League-era, the wish to maintain Jewish life in the Diaspora formed an important incentive to join the Territorialists.¹³⁵ For instance, in 1929, Israel Isidor Mattuck, the first Rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London, justified his adherence to Territorialism by explaining that, although he was a Jew, he did not belong to Palestine. "There are so many of us who have national associations of our own and want no other."¹³⁶ Lucien Wolf was "still convinced that we Jews have outgrown the uni-national stage of our history, and that we have far larger destinies to fulfil in our Dispersion". The practical nature of the ITO and the fact that it sought solutions within the British Empire convinced Wolf to become an "Itoist".¹³⁷

Whereas these ITO-members clung to Diaspora values, in Zangwill's eyes this same Diaspora slowed down Jewish political processes: it "lacked consciousness!"¹³⁸ By the early 1920s, Zangwill still did not see the Jews forming a political entity. What he had previously presented as an advantage, namely that Jews were first and foremost loyal to the states in which they lived, had become a limitation. Zangwill, by now disillusioned as to Jewish politics, wondered what kind of future the Jews were facing: as a race, a religion or as a nation like any other?¹³⁹ The "Anglo-Jewish Grand Dukes" and the "American Archdukes"¹⁴⁰ had done nothing to further the movement's ambitions and, echoing Ahad Ha'Am, Zangwill concluded that Zionism had only strengthened and expanded the Diaspora, by adding Palestine to it.¹⁴¹ He deplored the purely racial nationalism that Jewish nationalism had become, and rejected the self-assigned label of "Zionist" that Jews,

¹³⁴ Zangwill, *The East African Question*, 32-3. Zangwill believed that the absence of such a loyalty issue would convince the "shrewd" Young Turks to grant Mesopotamia to the ITO: Zangwill, "Be Fruitful and Multiply," 14.

¹³⁵ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 112.

¹³⁶ 'Dr. Mattuck on Palestine', *Jewish Guardian* (25 October 1929), CZA A330/581.

¹³⁷ Jewish Territorial Organization, *Ito Pamphlet No. 1*, 9, 23-4. This decision was remarkable, as in 1905, just before Zangwill left the Zionist movement, the two men had been in strong disagreement over both Zionism and the Uganda proposal and had attacked each other in the press: Zangwill, "Mr. Lucien Wolf," 425.

¹³⁸ Zangwill to Grossmann, 29 September 1921, CZA A330/153. Zangwill wrote this draft for a postcard to congratulate the Jewish Correspondence Bureau (JCB) on its two-year existence: "The Diaspora lacked consciousness! The JCB has largely provided the missing nerve-system. Thanks & congratulations. Israel Zangwill" Zangwill might have realised the harshness of his critique on Diaspora Judaism: in the sideline of this note he scribbled: "I wrote 'missing' on card [...], but perhaps 'necessary' is better."

¹³⁹ Samuel Roth and Israel Zangwill, *Now and Forever; a Conversation with Mr. Israel Zangwill on the Jew and the Future* (New York: R. M. McBride & company, 1925), 24-6.

¹⁴⁰ Zangwill, "Watchman", 11-2.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 34, 38.

especially in the U.S., assumed, without ever considering moving to Palestine themselves. To Zangwill, this “Diaspora Palestinism” was a farce.¹⁴²

While the masses of the Jewish Diaspora had transformed universalist Jewish beliefs into a narrow, Zionist concept of nationalism,¹⁴³ the conviction held by more traditional forces that Jews should passively await a messianic future outraged Zangwill even more. Already in 1907, he wrote furiously to the Russian Territorialists: “You have abandoned Zionism, but not the idea of a Meshiach who will do for us what every other people on earth has to do for itself.”¹⁴⁴ This conviction constituted “a superstition more contemptable than the lowest gospel of race-Zionism.” In practice it would lead to a martyr’s death for Jews and the Jewish people. Instead, Jews should look forward, while cherishing their history and traditions: “The past is our cradle, not our prison, and there is danger as well as appeal in its glamour. The past is for inspiration, not imitation, for continuation, not repetition.”¹⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the current situation was that “Jews have no unity except in suffering. The Diaspora—and even the so-called Jewish Home in Palestine has become part of the Diaspora—is remarkable for nothing more than for its leaderlessness and its disamalgamation.”¹⁴⁶

The reality of Jewish Diaspora life and of modern Jewish nationalism was thus a direct attack on the Jewish universalism that Zangwill held so dearly. He strongly believed in the creation of a universal world order, beneficial to all mankind.¹⁴⁷ According to traditional Jewish messianic beliefs, the Jewish people had a moral obligation towards the rest of the human race, by forming the vanguard of a movement leading to a universal brotherhood of men. This could only be achieved by creating a strong Jewish unity, a spiritual centre, which would function as ancient Athens had done in spreading culture and justice in the world.¹⁴⁸ For Zangwill, neither Zionism nor Territorialism stood in the way of such universal principles. A first requirement to brotherhood was self-definition:

¹⁴² Ibid., 14, 16, 19.

¹⁴³ Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 86-7.

¹⁴⁴ Zangwill to The Central Russian Directorate, 30 January 1907, CZA A120/60, pp. 9-10; Zangwill to The Central Russian Directorate, 10 April 1907, CZA A120/60, pp. 11-12.

¹⁴⁵ Zangwill, “A Territorial Solution of The Jewish Problem,” (reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, April 1919) *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945) 11-13: 12-13.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Is the Ku-Klux Klan Constructive or Deconstructive?’, CZA A120/94, p. 2: 19.

¹⁴⁷ Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 78, 82; Leftwich to Herbert Howarth (Abelard-Schuman Limited Publishers), 8 January 1956, CZA A330/841.

¹⁴⁸ Zangwill, “A Territorial Solution of The Jewish Problem,” (reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, April 1919) *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945) 11-13: 13.

it takes two to make one brother.¹⁴⁹ The “principle of nationalities” was an individual expression of a universal ideal.¹⁵⁰

Space, Race and Colonialism

These universalistic ideals did not prevent an intrinsic connection that was forged between Territorialism and colonial thinking. Such a connection was apparent ever since the movement’s inception. The incentive for Zangwill and his cohort to leave the Zionist movement had been the young Territorialists’ disillusionment with the Zionist rejection of a purely colonial solution to the Jewish problem: the Uganda proposal. Moreover, the provisional plan for the Jewish settlement on the Guas Ngishu Plateau, which was to be named “New Palestine”, completely disregarded the indigenous population; it even included the right to expand the territory over time.¹⁵¹ After its formation, the ITO’s initial ambition was to procure a territory in one of the British overseas colonies. It was this aspiration that also got some prominent English Jews on board. Lucien Wolf saw as “one of the great needs of today in Imperial politics [...] to pour men and capital into the waste lands of the British Empire so that its resources might be utilised for the benefit of the Empire at large”.¹⁵² The ITO, like the Zionist Movement before it, also appealed to typically colonial methods to attain the future land, for instance the issuing of scientific investigations of potentially interesting areas.¹⁵³

That the Territorialists saw the Jewish future as tied up with the British Empire was in part determined by the Anglo-Jewish backgrounds of some of Territorialism’s protagonists, most notably Zangwill and later Freeland Joseph Leftwich. Samuel Roth, in a fabricated polemical conversation with Zangwill, described his image of the writer as a land-hungry English Pharaoh: “As for his pursuit of the phantom of territorialism – it is Pharaoh’s policy of expansion within his own domain [the British Empire].”¹⁵⁴ Through these Anglo-Jewish figures the English connection did not only define the movement’s practical programme, but it also had a large impact on its ideological content. For instance, whereas Diaspora Nationalists in Central and Eastern Europe had increasing difficulties with synthesising their Jewishness and humanistic European culture with the

¹⁴⁹ Nahshon and Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 32-3.

¹⁵⁰ Lederhendler, “Rereading the Americanization Narratives,” 261.

¹⁵¹ Alroey, “Angolan Zion,” 191-3.

¹⁵² Jewish Territorial Organization, *Ito Pamphlet No. 1*, 7-8, 12.

¹⁵³ Bar-Yosef and Valman, “Between the East End and East Africa,” 23.

¹⁵⁴ Roth and Zangwill, *Now and Forever*, 146.

rise of anti-Semitism and eventually Nazism,¹⁵⁵ Territorialists could hold on to their belief in these humanistic values through their reliance on an Anglo-Imperial worldview.

To reach a deeper understanding of this early Territorialist connection to British colonial thinking, we should also analyse the movement's connection to broader Anglo-Jewish and British politics. During the ITO-period, the Anglo-Jewish political landscape was diffuse, mainly divided between what was termed the poorer, immigrant East End faction and the West End elite-Jews. With the advent of Zionism, the East Enders were inclined to support it, partly as an attempt to downplay the influence of the old Jewish nobility.¹⁵⁶ The latter, unsurprisingly, felt threatened by the increasingly popular Zionist Movement and its supporters and were therefore generally anti-Zionist.¹⁵⁷ Herzl, in his correspondence with Zangwill and his cousin Joseph Cowen, repeatedly attacked the English "Snobs", "the Idiots", but also realised that he needed their support.¹⁵⁸

Zangwill, positioned somewhere in between East and West End, used his influence amongst West End Jewry to further the Territorialist cause. Sometimes, simple flattery was used: Zangwill wrote to Leopold de Rothschild that he hoped "that your Lordship was about to crown the historic position of the house of Rothschild by negotiating with the Porte for this land of refuge [in Cyrenaica] for the oppressed Jew."¹⁵⁹ The maintaining of close relationships with important Anglo-Jewish figures required a constant diplomatic balancing act, especially where it was the aim to attract those who were charmed by Territorialist ideas, but were fearful of anything that smacked of anti-Zionism. Zangwill proved to be rather skilled at striking the right balance.

Non-Jewish British politicians were aware of the strategic opportunities offered by some involvement in Jewish politics. One critical analysis of the Uganda proposal states that it was meant to help limit Jewish immigration to the British Isles, a development leading up to the 1905 Aliens Act.¹⁶⁰ In fact, during the early years of the ITO's existence, Zangwill, not insensitive to these motives, used them to convince the British government,

¹⁵⁵ Joshua Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013), 13, 19.

¹⁵⁶ Nahshon and Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 30; Mark Levene, "Jews, Britons, Empire: And How Things Might Be Very Different," *Jewish Culture and History* 12, no. 1-2 (2010): 67-8.

¹⁵⁷ Bar-Yosef and Valman, "Between the East End and East Africa," 14, 21; Levene, "Jews, Britons, Empire," 67.

¹⁵⁸ Herzl to Joseph Cowen, 13 November 1901, CZA A120/681, p. 6; Herzl to Zangwill, 15 October 1901, CZA A120/681, p. 31; Herzl to Zangwill, 27 January 1902, CZA A120/681, p. 34

¹⁵⁹ Zangwill to Rothschild, 3 November 1907, CZA A120/69, pp. 12-13.

¹⁶⁰ Eitan Bar-Yosef, "Spying out the Land: The Zionist Expedition to East Africa, 1905," in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2-3.

as well as leading British Jews to cooperate with the Territorialists. After all, the latter's schemes would help to keep the stream of immigration from the British shores.¹⁶¹ Over the course of time, however, he came to actively oppose the immigration restrictions the United States and Great Britain were increasingly imposing from the early 1920s onwards.¹⁶²

The Balfour Declaration marked a decisive moment in Anglo-Jewish relations. In his reassessment of its political origins and meaning, James Renton concludes that the issuing of the Declaration was largely based on a false British assumption of a supposed unity and power among Jews, which was represented by the Zionists. As we have seen, in reality there was no clear singular Jewish political identity.¹⁶³ Even how the Declaration came about shows that Jewish politics was not one-dimensional. Some prominent non-Zionist Anglo-Jewish figures tried to gain control of the British decision-making process vis-à-vis Palestine. For instance, as mentioned, Lucien Wolf was closely involved with the Territorialist movement preceding and during the period in which the Balfour Declaration was drafted. "I may say this much," Zangwill wrote to Herwald in 1915, "that we prefer to enter into relations of the Conjoint Committee [of the Board of Deputies of British Jews], for that now holds the springs of power and the confidence of the Government. Besides, it is practically Lucien Wolf and Wolf is our man."¹⁶⁴ Still, Renton identifies Wolf as one of the main responsible agents behind the formulation of Balfour's letter to Lord Rothschild. This was due to Wolf's desire to steal away the initiative from the Zionists.¹⁶⁵

Despite his short-lived enthusiasm about the issuing of the Balfour Declaration, Zangwill gradually changed his initial pro-British attitude.¹⁶⁶ Especially after the White Paper of 1922, which limited Jewish immigration into Palestine, he considered the British government to be neglecting its earlier made promise of the founding of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. In fact, he reminded his government, the British mandate had been partly conditional upon it.¹⁶⁷ Even earlier, in 1920, Zangwill had already been critical of

¹⁶¹ Zangwill to Rothschild, 3 November 1907, CZA A120/69, pp. 12-13; Letter with attachments, signed D'Avigdor Goldsmid and Rothschild to several Jewish Organisations in immigration countries, asking them to adopt Jewish-Russian immigrants, as Europe itself is now "satisfied", [no date], CZA A330/630.

¹⁶² Lederhendler, "Rereading the Americanization Narratives," 256.

¹⁶³ James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance 1914-1918* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3, 130, 13, 16.

¹⁶⁴ Zangwill to Herwald, 29 March 1915, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁶⁵ Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade*, 48-9.

¹⁶⁶ Rochelson, "Zionism, Territorialism," 149.

¹⁶⁷ Draft text Zangwill, July 1922, CZA A330/153.

political decisions of the British mandatory authorities in Palestine. Future Zionist Revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky was facing a 15-year prison sentence as a result of his involvement in the Palestine riots of that year. Zangwill reacted thus:

The monstrous sentence for the crime of self-defence which had been passed on Jabotinsky by the foolish British bureaucrats in Palestine, who, having allowed a pogrom to take place in Jerusalem, proceeded to add impudence to incompetence, will of course be quashed by the Home Government.¹⁶⁸

Despite this criticism, Territorialism's reliance on an imperial world system would remain central to the movement during the decades to come. Connected to these colonial attachments was the Territorialists' use of racial discourse. Zangwill saw Judaism as a moral religion, a moral code, which was not defined by racial backgrounds or superficial traditions. Thus, he was able to consider the non-Jew Emile Zola, who publicly defended Alfred Dreyfus when the latter became the victim of a large and unexpected anti-Semitic wave in France at the end of the nineteenth century, a "truer Jew than many a born, married and buried Jew."¹⁶⁹ Seemingly contradictory, Zangwill did see the Jews as constituting a race, but this race and its biological traits were historically defined. This version of "race" was not wholly deterministic: "We are the heirs of the past, not its slaves."¹⁷⁰

Nevertheless, Zangwill thought of Eastern European Jews in racial terms. Also, although never entirely convinced by Anglo-Jewish race theorist Joseph Jacobs' approach, he was certainly influenced by it. He even gave it his own twist, by claiming to show how Jewish assimilation was in fact a biological attempt at survival: "Indeed, Marranoism [Zangwill's term for the Jewish historical trend to visibly assimilate to the non-Jewish world, while secretly holding on to certain Jewish practices] both in its major and minor forms, may be regarded as an exemplification of the Darwinian theory of protective coloring." In a similar vein, he argued that the Jews would be great colonisers as they were supposedly better able to adapt to warm climates than other white people.¹⁷¹ This seemingly blatantly racist discourse notwithstanding, there remained a degree of

¹⁶⁸ Note Zangwill, 26 April 1920, CZA A330/153.

¹⁶⁹ Faris, "Israel Zangwill's Challenge": 86.

¹⁷⁰ Zangwill, "Mr. Lucien Wolf," 406-7.

¹⁷¹ Alroey, "Mesopotamia," 922.

ambivalence in Zangwill's employment of racial terms. He spoke of the "Jewish race", but mostly when referring to Eastern European Jews. Moreover, in such accounts "race" was often equivalent to "culture", "religion" or "tradition": when he wrote in 1910 that as a result of the imminent abolishment of the Pale of Settlement "[v]ery soon a fervid Russian patriotism will reign in every Ghetto and the melting-up of the race will begin", this racial "melting-up" referred to his anxieties regarding Emancipation's dissolving effect on Eastern European Jewish culture, rather than on the Jewish race.¹⁷² Despite this ambivalence as to the actual racist content of Zangwill's expression, it was Zangwill's seemingly racist thinking regarding Judaism that had made Herzl somewhat uneasy about the Englishman when the two first met in 1895.¹⁷³

Even though Zangwill later deplored the Zionist racial thinking, and did see a Jewish "race-bond" as insufficient to keep the people together,¹⁷⁴ "race" remained a valid category for the English writer when talking about indigenous peoples on colonial lands. Employing race-related discourse simply meant to speak the language of the times. It was entirely acceptable to think of the colonial world as lacking white inhabitants and terming this a problem.¹⁷⁵ Zangwill may have believed that differences between races were virtually non-existent ("[n]ot only is every race akin to every other but every people is a hotch-pot of races") when speaking about Jews, but such reservations did not apply to his view of the black inhabitants of East Africa, the Jews' potential "barbarian neighbours".¹⁷⁶ In theory, an individual's "color is not an unbridgeable and elemental distinction", and even Jews appeared in all shades. Whenever "colour" became a colonial category, however, even the liberal Zangwill could not resist expressing himself in racist terms.¹⁷⁷

In light of existing trends and opinions, Zangwill did explicitly also place the "Jewish problem" within the context of a globally ongoing race war, but compared to the "colour problem", the Jewish one was much less pertinent for white rulers.¹⁷⁸ In 1911, Zangwill addressed the Universal Races Congress, defending the historical Jewish medical

¹⁷² Zangwill, *The Problem of the Jewish Race*, 10, 19-20.

¹⁷³ Bar-Yosef and Valman, "Between the East End and East Africa," 11; Dubnov, "True Art," 103, 113-16. For more on Joseph Jacobs's career as a race scientist see John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-De-Siècle Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), ch. 4. According to Freund, writing at the end of Zangwill's lifetime, not race but religion was the main motif in Zangwill's account of Jewish history: Freund, *Israel Zangwill's Stellung*, 14.

¹⁷⁴ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 271.

¹⁷⁵ See for instance: Spire, *Israël Zangwill*, 71.

¹⁷⁶ Zangwill, "Mr. Lucien Wolf," 419.

¹⁷⁷ Zangwill, *The Problem of the Jewish Race*, 16-7.

¹⁷⁸ Zangwill, "Be Fruitful and Multiply," 19, 14.

virtues and talents.¹⁷⁹ Like Zangwill, Zionist sociologist Arthur Ruppin was also a racist thinker. As Amos Morris-Reich points out, such deterministic racial thinking did not preclude a larger humanistic outlook, especially vis-à-vis the Palestinian Arabs, an issue to which we will return shortly.¹⁸⁰

Territorialism and Zionism

The colonial aspects of early Territorialism were not unique to the movement, but were shared by Zionism: the Zionists thought of the indigenous Middle Eastern population as uncultured. As a consequence, the land on which these people lived became unpopulated in the Zionists' imagination. Especially during the first years of its existence, the ITO was still heavily influenced by the Zionist adoption of European colonialist modes of thinking.¹⁸¹ Besides the colonial dimension, there were also other similarities and affiliations between Zionism and Territorialism. Like the former, Zangwill's movement was based on the original ideas of Herzl and Pinsker, but carried them much further. Zangwill knew more about Judaism and its traditions than Herzl had done, but was at the same time also more extreme in his rejection of it. More than Herzl, Zangwill wanted to achieve normalcy for Jews in the non-Jewish world. This could be done either by creating for them a state like all other states, or by freeing them of their status of peculiarity when living amongst gentiles. The choice was between accepting the loss of Judaism for all eternity and an active attempt to recover it. Neither Zangwill nor Herzl had dismissed the gentile world as a place in which the Jew could live. However, reality forced both men to look for alternatives.¹⁸²

Before his Territorialist days, Zangwill had vehemently supported and shaped Zionism. In his 1919 *History of Zionism*, Nahum Sokolow regarded Zangwill as an important propagandist for the movement between 1899 and 1906.¹⁸³ Although David Glover rightly wonders whether Zangwill could be considered a true part of Zionist history,¹⁸⁴ Sokolow might have been partly right: before 1905, when Zangwill still saw the East African Uganda scheme as a Zionist plan, he passionately defended Zionism.

¹⁷⁹ Mitchell Bryan Hart, *The Healthy Jew: The Symbiosis of Judaism and Modern Medicine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20.

¹⁸⁰ Amos Morris-Reich, "Arthur Ruppin's Concept of Race," *Israel Studies* 11, no. 3 (2006): 1, 4, 5.

¹⁸¹ Alroey, "Mesopotamia," 911, 923.

¹⁸² Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, 435-6, 352, 55, 56; Arno J. Mayer, *Plowshares into Swords: From Zionism to Israel* (London/New York: Verso, 2008), 102-3.

¹⁸³ Dubnov, "True Art," 117-8.

¹⁸⁴ Glover, "Imperial Zion," 131.

According to him, anti-Zionists were “poor sick patient[s], who should be treated in a sanatorium”. He repeatedly warned his readership against the dangers of assimilation and he saw the Zionist enterprise as a sort of “spiritual counter-Reformation”.¹⁸⁵

Even after his defection from mainstream Zionism, Zangwill cooperated with Zionists. While the First World War froze most of the ITO’s already laborious activities, Zangwill took the time to team up with the future Zionist Revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky to create the so-called Zion Mule Corps. This unit would aid the British forces in the Middle East in defeating the Ottomans. Zangwill and Jabotinsky also hoped that the Corps would contribute to the furthering of the Zionist ambitions in Palestine (and possibly Zangwill believed it might create more general British goodwill that could be beneficial to the Territorialist ambitions). In the end, although a Jewish Legion was founded on 23 August 1917, it did not play a significant role in the war efforts.¹⁸⁶ It did show that Zangwill had not completely broken with the idea of a Jewish future in Palestine. To him, however, this simply could not be the only option explored.

Apart from Zangwill’s personal connection to the Zionist past, there are also other reasons to claim that Zionist and the ITO’s history are in fact closely intertwined. Like the Balfour Declaration, the Uganda controversy was a central event in the development of the clear and concrete importance of Palestine within political Zionism:¹⁸⁷ the schism Uganda created within the Zionist movement forced the Palestine “hard-liners” to explicitly define their absolute devotion to the Holy Land as the future place for the Jewish state. Surprisingly, between 1903 and 1905, during the discussions regarding the plan, the seemingly obvious argument that Palestine held more resonance for the Jewish people than an East-African stretch of land was not raised. To Alroey, this omission of the “value” argument is further proof of the fact that, at the time, Palestine was not yet Zionism’s clear focal point. Zionism and Territorialism therefore represented rather two versions of the same narrative than opposing viewpoints.¹⁸⁸

Surely, Palestine held a central position in Zionist theory, but in practice Herzl explored several options for Jewish settlement: as a separate political unit or as a “white”

¹⁸⁵ Dubnov, “True Art,” 124.

¹⁸⁶ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, xiv, 187. In Zangwill’s opinion, the existence of the unit was beneficial to the Jewish-British relations that were so essential for his Territorialist ambitions. Furthermore, “[a]s the work of the corps is only to take provisions and equipment to the trenches on their mules, they [the recruits] have all the glory of serving a great cause and all the chances of heroism without the sad necessity of slaughtering others.”: Draft text with Zangwill’s handwriting, [1915], CZA A330/153.

¹⁸⁷ Gur Alroey, “People to Land and Not Land to People: The Jewish Territorialism Organization (Ito), and the Jewish Emigration at the Beginning of the 20th Century [in Hebrew],” *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel* 14 (2004).

¹⁸⁸ Alroey, “Journey to New Palestine,” 48; Alroey, *Seeking a Homeland*.

satellite in one of the overseas colonial territories. As Zangwill wrote shortly after the Zionist leader's death in 1904: "Herzl did but gaze on the promised land. He did not get us Palestine. Rather he kept us out of Palestine[.]"¹⁸⁹ This pragmatism was what got Zangwill involved with Zionism from 1895 onwards. As already mentioned, there is thus something to say for the analysis of Territorialism as the continuation of Herzl's Zionism, more than the Zionist Movement itself after 1905.¹⁹⁰

Herzl, however, did not want to become openly involved with all the different schemes he covertly explored. He explicitly asked his close affiliates to negotiate on the Zionists' behalf, but he wanted to be sure about the attainability of a certain option before he would officially connect his name to it: "don't involve me in the game, before the man [the Ottoman Sultan] has surely been won over, otherwise it will lead to a harmful embarrassment." This is why the future Territorialists seemingly fared their own course, while in reality Herzl was equally interested in places like Cyprus, El Arish and Morocco.¹⁹¹ When the El Arish plan fell to the water—or rather fell due to the lack of it—he was genuinely disappointed and wrote to Zangwill: "The fact remains that an undertaking, to which for a year we devoted large efforts, care and such great costs, has been lost. Let us take it like men."¹⁹²

After the establishment of the ITO in 1905, several Zionists expressed their support.¹⁹³ Mayer Sulzberger, a Zionist, but also a private supporter of Territorialism, saw the ITO not as replacing, but as supplementing Zionism. Max Nordau explicitly stated that one could be both Zionist and Territorialist. Nachman Syrkin agreed. As his SS declared: "We do not attach any real value to our supposed 'historic rights' to that country [Palestine]".¹⁹⁴ Obviously, in its early days, the ITO happily used such comments

¹⁸⁹ Zangwill, *The East African Question*, 29; Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1995), 335.

¹⁹⁰ Glover, "Imperial Zion," 132-3.

¹⁹¹ Original: "mich nicht früher ins Spiel ziehen, als bis der mann sicher gewonnen ist, sonst kommt eine schädliche Blamage heraus.": Theodor Herzl to Joseph Cowen, 8 February 1902, CZA A120/681, p. 7, underlining in original; p. Herzl to Cowen, 27 April 1903 CZA A120/681, p. 8; Herzl to Cowen, 20 July 1903, CZA A120/681, p. 10; Herzl to Zangwill, 18 November 1902, CZA A120/681, p. 45; Herzl to Zangwill, 10 May 1903, CZA A120/681, p. 54.

¹⁹² Original: "Die Thatsache bleibt, dass eine Unternehmung, an die wir ein Jahr schwerster Mühe, Sorge n. so grosse Kosten wandten, verloren ist. Tragen wir es, wie Männer.": Herzl to Zangwill, 12 May 1903, CZA A120/681, p. 55.

¹⁹³ Zangwill to Redcliffe Salaman, 3 November 1906), CZA A120/71, p. 7; Nahum Sokolow and Chaim Weizmann to Zangwill, 22 August 1917, A330/153.

¹⁹⁴ Eventually however, Syrkin's Territorialist past was erased from his biography: Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 114; Vasos I. Vliavianos and Feliks Gross, *Struggle for Tomorrow: Modern Political Ideologies of the Jewish People* (New York: Arts, Incorporated, 1954), 115, 28; Alroey, *Seeking a Homeland*.

for propaganda purposes.¹⁹⁵ To aid this effort, the Territorialists at times sought open rapprochement to the Zionist Movement.¹⁹⁶ In 1915, Herwald already suggested the creation of a joint committee between the Zionists and the ITO, as he saw these two bodies as the only nationalist Jewish organisations in existence.¹⁹⁷ The year before, he had proposed that Zionism could be corrected through Territorialism: "In my opinion we have a certain chance to bring the Zionists back to political Zionism." In his reply, Zangwill happily reported that "[f]inally, the Zionists having made overtures to me, I am corresponding with them".¹⁹⁸

As mentioned, during the last full ITO-meeting in late 1922, Herwald reiterated his suggestion that the ITO merge with the Zionist movement, without fully abandoning its ideals and ambitions. These ideals, however, had to be focused on shaping Palestine as a Jewish territory on a real political basis. As Zionism was not functioning well, according to Herwald, Territorialism could mend this shortcoming:

I am convinced that a great number of Zionists who are dissatisfied with the present political statesmanship would be glad to join such an [ITO] organisation. As a person who comes amongst Zionists frequently I think I am voicing their opinion when I say that what is required at present is a good strong political Zionist organisation. I think that the present agitation in the press both for and against the mandate strengthens my opinion that Zionists are waking up to the fact that the political negotiations have not been handled in a manner which would secure us a legally assured home.¹⁹⁹

Herwald expected support for such a Territorialist takeover from the people around the

¹⁹⁵ Jewish Territorial Organization, *Ito Pamphlet No. 1*, 19, 21.

¹⁹⁶ Jewish Territorial Organization, "Mesopotamia", 13, 26. Zangwill agreed with Thomas Hardy's suggestion in 1906 that Territorialism could benefit Zionism: 'Letters and the ITO', *The Fortnightly Review*, (1906), CZA A330/153.

¹⁹⁷ Herwald to Zangwill, March 1915, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁹⁸ Herwald to Zangwill, 22 November 1914; Zangwill to Herwald, 24 November 1914, both in YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁹⁹ T.B. Herwald to Zangwill and M. Spielmann, 17 November 1922, YIVO RG255, Box 1. Herwald was indeed a known figure within Zionist circles. He attended several Zionist Congresses (1905 and 1921) and was on the invitation list of the British branch of the Union of Zionist-Revisionists: Delegierten-Karte 682 Herwald (Liverpool) for the 7th Zionist Congress; Invitation to the Union of Zionist-Revisionist, Central Committee for Great Britain, 1st Annual Conference in London (11 May 1930); A 'Shekel' for 1906, purchased by Herwald from the English Zionist Federation; H. Samuel (secretary of the transport department of the Zionist Organisation's Central Office in London) to the secretary of the Czecho-Slovakian delegation, 18 August 1921; T.B. Herwald, 'Zionism in Manchester 1891-1901', YIVO RG255, Box 2.

prominent American Zionist leader Louis Brandeis, as well as from the orthodox Mizrahi party within Zionism.²⁰⁰

Despite the ideological connections and occasional moments of cooperation between Zionists and Territorialists during this early ITO-phase, the general image that arises when assessing the relationship between the two movements is not exactly harmonious. The split of 1905 led to a rule within the Zionist movement that did not allow its members to officially suggest non-Palestinian locations.²⁰¹ The Zionists saw the Territorialists as a threat to their cause, while the Territorialists felt that they were under constant Zionist attack. Underlying this animosity were not only political rivalries and fears, but also deeper ideological differences.

Arch-Zionist Max Nordau was immediately sceptical when Herzl began to consider the Uganda proposal. For Nordau, Zionism meant a reinstatement and expansion of the Jewish political agency that had existed in the ghettos and Jewish organised communities, or *kehillot*, during the pre-Enlightenment period. The *Haskalah* had deprived the Jews of their Jewishness and therewith of their Jewish political existence. Zionism could now not accept anything less than full political autonomy, and Uganda simply did not offer that.²⁰²

In 1944, Hannah Arendt accused Herzl and his followers of having been naive to wish for what she called “utopian nationalist independence”: the Zionists would always remain dependent on the benevolence of other nations.²⁰³ If a wish for complete independence was indeed part of the Zionist aspirations, then Territorialism was incompatible with Zionism. After all, it was inherent in Territorialist thinking to hitch the movement’s fortunes to territories that belonged to other states. Moreover, Territorialist leaders recurrently mentioned the moral impetus a future peaceful Jewish settlement would mean for the whole non-Jewish world. Politically, this attitude could not result in a self-centred, entirely independent Jewish entity.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ T.B. Herwald to Zangwill and M. Spielmann, 17 November 1922, YIVO RG255, Box 1. Interestingly, by 1936, Herwald had become much less favourable to Zionism: Herwald to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 June 1936, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

²⁰¹ Alroey, “Angolan Zion,” 182.

²⁰² Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 110. Nordau would soon change his mind, legitimising this change of heart by terming Uganda a necessary, but temporary “Nachtasyl” or ‘Nightly Asylum’ for persecuted Jews: Almog, *Zionism and History*, 255.

²⁰³ Hannah Arendt, “Zionism Reconsidered,” in *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), 367.

²⁰⁴ Zionism was not replete of such messianic elements either. See for instance Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For more studies on the relationship between Zionism and religion (of which the movement’s stance towards

In part because of these fundamental and irreconcilable differences, ever since the Territorialists' departure from the Zionist movement in 1905, the general Zionist attitude towards them ("scrap metal", "alien material"²⁰⁵) had been one of distrust or even outright hostility. In 1911, the Zionist British newspaper *The Jewish Chronicle* wrote: "We appeal to Mr. Zangwill to pull himself together and play a better part than that of wet blanket in the great drama of Jewish contemporary history –he is, we believe, capable of a far nobler *role*."²⁰⁶ In 1905, the Dutch Zionist Gerhard Calman Polak, in a privately published pamphlet, accused Zangwill of treason, which "[h]e has excused [...] with the explanation: "the end justifies the means.""²⁰⁷ Shortly after Zangwill's death, Myer Jack Landa, a self-proclaimed admirer of the English writer, nonetheless felt that the latter's political choices had partly been to blame for his demise. According to Landa, the formation of the ITO "was a blunder of colossal magnitude". It lacked "statesmanship" and "vision". Zangwill unjustly "harboured the heresy that he could change the current of Jewish hope—away from Zion and historic consciousness. The Ito was a fiasco from its cradle". By organising the Territorialists, Zangwill had "gone astray".²⁰⁸

Zangwill and his entourage did not quietly accept these attacks. They too criticised the Zionists, whom they accused of being only concerned with outwardly appearance.²⁰⁹ In contrast to the Zionists' open litanies against Territorialism, this criticism was mainly expressed in closed Territorialist circles and only occasionally in the press: the Territorialists did not want to antagonise the Zionist world. Therefore, officially, the ITO "as a body [took] no position towards Zionism, its members being left free to determine their individual relations to that movement."²¹⁰ Unofficially, the Territorialists feared their schemes would be killed or even captured alive "by our Zionist enemies".²¹¹ In a

messianism forms an important part) see S. Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira, *Zionism and Religion* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998); Salmon, *Religion and Zionism*.

²⁰⁵ Elias Auerbach, quoted in Almog, *Zionism and History*, 300.

²⁰⁶ 'The tergiversation of Mr. Zangwill', *Jewish Chronicle* (6 January 1911), CZA A330/2.

²⁰⁷ Original: "Sein Verrat an Zion hat er entschuldigt mit der Erklärung: "der Zweck heiligt die Mittel."" : Gerhard Calman Polak, *Anti-Zionisten als Delegierte zum Zionisten-Kongress* (1905). Four years earlier, Polak had engaged in a polemical discussion with Max Nordau on the pages of the Zionist *Die Welt* over Nordau's assertions that Western European Emancipation for Jews was a farce: Almog, *Zionism and History*, 210-11.

²⁰⁸ Landa, "Israel Zangwill," 320, 317.

²⁰⁹ Ginsburg to Zangwill, 5 July 1914 and 13 July 1914, CZA A36/3; Léon Paperin to Zangwill, 16 July 1914, CZA A36/3; D. Jochelman to Zangwill, 10 February 1915, CZA A330/153.

²¹⁰ Jewish Territorial Organization, *Ito Pamphlet No. 1*, 4, 12; ITO-Leaflet no. 6: 'The ITO and its critics', [no date], CZA A36/8.

²¹¹ Zangwill to Mandelstamm, 21 August 1907, CZA A120/59.

private letter, Zangwill lamented that “the myriad old forces of compromise and cowardice rise on every hand to strangle any free movement.”²¹²

This was not an unfounded fear. The British supporters of Zionism openly attacked the Territorialist movement, especially via the influential *Jewish Chronicle*, after this paper came under the leadership of Leopold Greenberg in 1907. This development worried Zangwill, as until that moment he had kept warm ties with the Anglo-Jewish press.²¹³ He, and especially his Russian associate David S. Jochelman, did not intend to endure these attacks without defending themselves. In 1915, Jochelman wrote: “I think it will really be worth while to expose these microbes that have wormed their way into the body of the Jewish Nation.”²¹⁴ And in another letter: “I am prepared to make the greatest scandal these rich liars ever met with in their lives.”²¹⁵

Even though the ITO as such was careful not to state its negative opinions about the Zionists too bluntly, Zangwill himself was not afraid of creating controversy. On more than one occasion, he attacked what he saw as the flawed and dangerously counterproductive Zionist project: “It would be a sin to let our people in the meanwhile go to the dogs whilst we shout ‘Palestine and Palestine only’.”²¹⁶ About his changed position towards the Zionist ambitions in Palestine, he said: “consistency might be a political virtue, but I see no virtue in consistent lying.”²¹⁷ And, he scorned: “It certainly would have been an advantage if Dr. Herzl could have got together a real Jewish Congress for the consideration of the Jewish question, instead of a Congress pledged beforehand to a particular solution.”²¹⁸ In the ITO’s first pamphlet, Zangwill stated that Zionism was “nothing more than a poetic ideal”, while the ITO attracted “more serious spirits” and would soon “eclipse” the Zionist Movement.²¹⁹ Zionism was like an “opium-dream”, but

²¹² Zangwill to Salaman, 10 November 1905, CZA A120/71-4.

²¹³ Zangwill to Rothschild, [1907], CZA A120/69, pp. 4-5; Jochelman to Zangwill, 27 October 1915, 23 October 1915 and 16 October 1915, CZA A330/153.

²¹⁴ Jochelman to Zangwill, 16 October 1915, CZA A330/153.

²¹⁵ Jochelman to Zangwill, 15 October 1915, CZA A330/153.

²¹⁶ ‘The Jewish Territorial Organisation. Branch Aam Israel’, fly-leaf no. 2, [no date], CZA A36/8.

²¹⁷ Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 85. In 1956, Leftwich described Zangwill as a dual person, “because the Itoist was a different man from the Zionist, at times even anti-Zionist, perhaps even sometimes anti-Itoist”: Leftwich to Howarth, 8 January 1956, CZA A330/841.

²¹⁸ Attachment to letter Zangwill to Schomer, 14 August 1907, CZA A330/153.

²¹⁹ Jewish Territorial Organization, *Ito Pamphlet No. 1*, 31.

these, "however beautiful, have the disadvantage that they never become solid and stable".²²⁰

Zangwill felt threatened by Zionist forces that made it into the ITO-ranks. Hermann Kisch, who had acted as an advisor to the ITO for several of its projects, wrote to Zangwill in 1914 that in his opinion the ITO should be disbanded: "Probably we all feel that the future Jewish Nation is more likely to be a worthy successor of the one which produced the Law and the Prophets if it is evolved in the atmosphere and environment of Palestine or Mesopotamia than if it arises from a melting pot in Angola or even in Mexico, Brazil, or the Argentine."²²¹ Zangwill responded harshly: he accused Kisch of having joined Territorialism solely to promote Zionism. However, these efforts were to no avail, as Zangwill did not lose faith in the ITO. This faith was

in our own human power to do the work, and in the duty to try. Such a faith cannot survive the refusal of all possible territories, some by the Jews, the rest by the owners. The world, as I pointed out, is a limited place and even Providence would be puzzled to accommodate so slack and inadventurous a people.²²²

After the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the Anglo-Jewish writer remained critical of Zionism. The opportunities offered by the Declaration had not been cashed and Zangwill saw this as a major mistake.²²³ Both David Glover and Hani A. Faris are therefore right in asserting that the much-repeated statement that after 1917 Zangwill returned to Zionism is not grounded in facts.²²⁴ By the early 1920s, he was still uttering criticism on the Zionist work:²²⁵ "Though the Zionists perfected the modern & political, [but at the same time

²²⁰ ITO-Leaflet no. 3: 'A letter addressed by Mr. Israel Zangwill to the secretary of the Manchester Branch of the Jewish Territorial Organization on the occasion of a Meeting of that Branch, 11th November, 1906', CZA A36/8.

²²¹ 'Note by Hermann M. Kisch on Mr. Z's confidential letter of October 8, 1913', YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²²² Zangwill to Kisch, 21 October 1913, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²²³ Rochelson, "Zionism, Territorialism," 149, 60; Nahshon and Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 34.

²²⁴ Glover, "Imperial Zion," 131; Faris, "Israel Zangwill's Challenge": 90, n. 75. This is confirmed by Freund's 1926 dissertation on Zangwill, published the following year: Freund, *Israel Zangwill's Stellung*, 67-9. Nowadays, some Zionist historians still incorrectly claim that Zangwill returned to Zionism after the Balfour Declaration was issued: Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 139.

²²⁵ Zangwill to Leftwich, 21 April 1920, CZA A120/431, p. 2; Note by Zangwill on Jabotinsky sentence, 26 April 1920, CZA A330/153; Zangwill to Leftwich, 5 July 1922, CZA A330/153.

Zangwill felt a true political basis was lacking²²⁶] they remained at heart mediaeval and theological.” However, the public “swallowed the Balfourian declaration as a millennial document[.]”²²⁷ Zangwill spoke of a “shameless rejoicing” over the Zionist work, and he perceived the fact that certain American journals did not publish his articles as proof that Zionism had established a censorship.²²⁸

In 1922, Zangwill looked back on his Zionist past: “I did not then share—nor do I altogether now share—their [Zionists’] dream. For the ravages wrought in the world by a narrow nationalism are only too tragically apparent.”²²⁹ Still, according to Zangwill, the ITO had attempted to collaborate with Zionism, especially after the issuing of Churchill’s White Paper of 1922, on the provision that Zionism indeed achieved an autonomous territory in Palestine. Weizmann had neglected this option because of the lack of substantial funds of the ITO “and money was, according to the new Zionist gospel, the sole factor in politics”.²³⁰

Zangwill’s negative position on Zionism culminated in his 1923 ‘Watchman, what of the night?’-speech, in which he declared Zionism dead. Shortly before the lecture, Zangwill had asked his host Stephen Wise if the latter had not forgotten “when you so generously invited me to say anything I like, that I plough a lonely furrow in the Palestine question.”²³¹ Despite this warning, Zangwill was still seen by many as a leading Zionist. His much-discussed address to the American Jewish Congress, therefore, came as a public shock, even though he had been propagating its core message for decades.²³²

With the speech, Zangwill had meant to incite his audience to action and to stimulate them to start faring an entirely different course. He wanted to finally see international Jewish political cooperation. What he observed instead was a Jewry that did not constitute “a cosmos, but a chaos”.²³³ The current Jewish inactivity made Judaism into a “living corpse”.²³⁴ In fact, Zangwill scorned, “[e]ven the Ku Klux Klan, with all its

²²⁶ Text Zangwill, July 1922, CZA A330/153.

²²⁷ Handwritten notes Zangwill, [1920], CZA A120/130, pp. 12, 14.

²²⁸ Zangwill to [?] Reubeni, 1 July 1920, CZA A330/153; Zangwill to Grossman, 7 September 1922, CZA A330/153.

²²⁹ Zangwill to Julius Berger and Dr. A. Hantke, 10 June 1922, CZA A120/30, p. 2.

²³⁰ Speech Zangwill, [no date], CZA A36/4; Zangwill to ITO members, 8 August 1922, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²³¹ Zangwill to Stephen Wise, summer 1923, CZA A330/153.

²³² ‘Temple and Community House Bulletin. Temple Beth-El, Rockaway Park, N.Y.’, 1923, CZA A120/69, pp. 24-25.

²³³ Zangwill, “*Watchman*”, 37-8, 6.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

absurdities, is to me more respectable than a racial Jewry that has lost its soul”.²³⁵ The League of Nations (“League of Damns”), with its worship of sovereignty, did not bring much good to the situation of minorities in the world.²³⁶ (Indeed, in 1920, Zangwill had unsuccessfully protested against the fact that Poland did not respect the minority rights the League claimed to protect.²³⁷) The day following the ‘Watchman’-address, during a second speech for a smaller audience, Zangwill stressed again that the only way forward was sound, combined Jewish action, which should also include the Palestinian Arabs. If such concerted action was to be undertaken, Zangwill would willingly offer his help.²³⁸ The invitation would never come.

Despite his persistent critical stance towards Zionism, it seems that by the 1920s Zangwill had accepted the Zionist victory. In 1920, Zangwill included in his will the provision that after his death one thousand pounds should be donated to the Zionist Organisation “if in my wife’s opinion it is building up ‘A Jewish National Home’”²³⁹ Also in 1920, a young Joseph Leftwich asked Zangwill to speak at a conference of a newly founded anti-Palestine action group.²⁴⁰ Zangwill declined,

as the Zionist Organization at present possesses the ear of the Government and the support of the vast majority of the Zionists in its meek acquiescence with whatever the Government does[.] [Y]ou must not look to me to lead a movement, the duty of which belongs to the Zionists themselves and which would only waste the time I can more advantageously devote to other objects.”²⁴¹

The “Arab Question”

As mentioned, much of Zangwill’s discontent with Zionism related to the Zionist movement’s dealing with the Palestinian Arabs. While still a representative of Zionism, Zangwill envisioned the Jewish state to becoming inclusive to non-Jews as well. Betraying his own less than rigid interpretation of the meaning of “Jewishness”, he believed that within the Jewish state, any alien minority that would want to become a part of the nation

²³⁵ Ibid., 18.

²³⁶ Ibid., 27-9, 8.

²³⁷ *The Jewish Exponent* clipping (17 December 1920), CZA A120/5.

²³⁸ Zangwill, “*Watchman*”, 45-6, 47, 49, 52.

²³⁹ Zangwill’s will, 11 January 1920, CZA A330/222.

²⁴⁰ Leftwich to Zangwill, 17 April 1920, CZA A120/431, p. 10.

²⁴¹ Zangwill to Leftwich, 21 April 1920, CZA A120/431, p. 7.

would simply become “Jews of the Christian or other persuasions”.²⁴² Soon Zangwill ceased to entertain such idealistic thoughts. He then became one of the first to openly recognise the presence of Palestinian Arabs and to warn against the problems that would accompany a large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine.²⁴³

Nonetheless, despite the existence of earlier critical Territorialist voices,²⁴⁴ Zangwill only started openly criticising Zionism on the basis of the Arab Question after the issuing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Following an initial period of enthusiasm, Zangwill concluded that the declaration’s formulation concerning the Arab population of Palestine made the perceived promise of a Jewish state nothing more than a pipe dream. In his eloquent and foresighted ‘Watchman’-speech, Zangwill accused the Zionists of not having acted upon the Arab question as he had himself suggested when it had still been possible: the recent war created a situation in which the Palestinian Arabs would have gladly accepted a new political structure. They may have even agreed with a land exchange or financial compensation in the way the Greek-Turkish exchange was being executed:

I shall always remain persuaded that a Jewish State was possible at the moment when the Arab was a defeated enemy, liberated from the Turk and glad enough to take on any political impress; that by a policy of racial redistribution such as is now in operation between the Greeks and the Turks under the Treaty of Lausanne, combined with full compensation for expropriated land,—a policy of mine with which even our *Morning Post* was originally satisfied—the difficulty of making a home out of a territory in which we are only one out of every nine inhabitants and in which our total holding of the soil is still below four per cent, could have been largely removed.²⁴⁵

Now that moment had passed and implementing any sort of population exchange had become “inadvisable”. By embracing the Balfour Declaration Zionism had sacrificed both autonomy and Arab recognition.²⁴⁶

²⁴² Zangwill, “Mr. Lucien Wolf,” 415.

²⁴³ Zangwill, *The East African Question*, 31-2; Rochelson, “Zionism, Territorialism,” 154-5; Faris, “Israel Zangwill’s Challenge”: 85.

²⁴⁴ Dowty, “A Question,” 35, n.8.

²⁴⁵ Zangwill, “*Watchman*”, 34.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 35-6.

The only remaining option was to take a hard line. As Zangwill wrote to Chaim Weizmann: “Unless it is impressed upon the Arab mentality that the programme of a ‘Jewish National Home’ is irrevocable, Palestine will become a second Egypt to England, and an ancient Egypt to its unfortunate Jews.”²⁴⁷ In 1923, Jabotinsky would make a similar claim in his famous essay ‘The Iron Wall’. Later, the Revisionist leader recalled Zangwill telling him during a personal conversation in 1916 that in his opinion resettlement of the Palestinian Arabs was a necessity. Jabotinsky then uttered his objections to this idea, to which the Englishman answered that there was to be no place for sentimental arguments in the new world order.²⁴⁸

Zangwill decided that for Balfour and the Jewish home in Palestine to work, the root of the problem had to be addressed: if such a state was to be created, the Arabs, who would never fully accept this political entity, would have to go. In a speech during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference Zangwill urged the attendees to design a resettlement programme for the Palestinian Arabs. Under the existing circumstances the envisioned Jewish National Home would be “neither Jewish nor National nor a Home.”²⁴⁹ This speech formed the basis for an article that the later Territorialists would quote and reprint until as late as 1945 (showing its continued relevance in the eyes of the Freeland Leaguers).

In this article Zangwill stated his opinion, reiterated a few years later in his ‘Watchman’-speech, that in a Palestine where Arabs outnumbered Jews six to one, a future Jewish state would only work if the Arabs would move away to a newly created Arab kingdom. This scenario, however, Zangwill did not see as realistic. What the Jews were left with now was a Zion that was nothing but “a bride who after her divorce from Israel has been twice married to Gentiles—once to a Christian and once to a Mohammedan—and when Israel takes her back he will find his household encumbered with the litter of the two intervening *ménages*”.²⁵⁰ In Biblical times, such a problem would have been solved by absorbing local tribes through intermarriage. But since Jews had become more tribally exclusive than ever before, “no neo-Jewish race, no synthesis of the Semitic tribes of Palestine, is likely to be again evolved to people and possess Palestine. Hence the difficulty arising from the native tribes is greater than in ancient Palestine; for

²⁴⁷ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 215; Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 231-2; Wohlgeleerter, *Israel Zangwill*, 170-2.

²⁴⁸ Gorni, *Zionism and the Arabs*, 271; Shabtai Teveth, *The Evolution of "Transfer" in Zionist Thinking* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Shiloah Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1989), 17.

²⁴⁹ Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 15, 188; Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 231-2.

²⁵⁰ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 281.

they can neither be expelled nor absorbed”.²⁵¹ The Zionists, instead of facing these facts, “[a]s Don Quixote could see great armies with banners where Sancho Panza could see only flocks of sheep, so our dreamers of the Ghetto see a full national life where a sober observer can see only a few farm colonies in an overwhelmingly alien environment”.²⁵² Territorialism was now the only way in which a Jewish settlement on an autonomous basis could be created. Sooner or later the Zionists would have to realise that “[o]ur formula, like Aaron’s rod, must swallow all the others”.²⁵³

Udelson interprets Zangwill’s ideas vis-à-vis the Palestinian Arabs as part of a phase of “militant Zionism” in the British author’s political career. The former pacifist now saw options for creating an “ITO-land” in Palestine. For this scheme to work, the Arabs’ wishes and concerns needed to be completely disregarded.²⁵⁴ It seems that Udelson’s view was shared by at least one of Zangwill’s close acquaintances. Redcliffe N. Salaman, later founder and chairman of the Israel Zangwill Memorial Fund, wrote to his wife at the beginning of 1919:

I am sorry that Zangwill is campaigning as it will only harass Weizmann, and the idea of clearing the Arab out bag and baggage is simply ridiculous and only comparable to Cromwell’s effort in Ireland. In time even the Arab will play a useful part; anyhow, the only pressure that can be used is a natural and economic one, with the effect which a higher has on an inferior civilisation.²⁵⁵

And in another letter:

It is radically wrong to suggest a complete removal of the Arab, simply because it is both impractical and un-English.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ Ibid., 284.

²⁵² Ibid., 281.

²⁵³ Zangwill, “A Territorial Solution of The Jewish Problem Part II,” (reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, April 1919), *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945) 11-13: 11, 13; The whole article was also reprinted in: Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 263-285. The “neither Jewish nor National nor a Home” phrase recurs in: Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 107; Zangwill, “*Watchman*”, 34.

²⁵⁴ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 186-9. See also Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill*, 233.

²⁵⁵ Redcliffe N. Salaman, *Palestine Reclaimed; Letters from a Jewish Officer in Palestine* (London/New York: G. Routledge/E.P. Dutton, 1920), 172. Amos Morris-Reich points out that Salaman thought in explicitly racial terms: Morris-Reich, “Arthur Ruppin,” 15. Despite his seeming concern for the Arab Palestinians, he did thus probably see them as racially distinct from the Jews.

²⁵⁶ Salaman, *Palestine Reclaimed*, 175.

Still, Zangwill's position towards the Arabs was not as "militant" as it seems at first glance, just as analyses of Jabotinsky's revisionism have often been too narrow in their descriptions of his politics as anti-Arab.²⁵⁷ Indeed, Zangwill termed a conquest of Palestine in theory "heroic",²⁵⁸ as he also believed that resettling the non-Jewish Palestinian population might actually have meant an improvement of their lives. Obviously, such comments were entirely self-serving to the Zionist cause that Zangwill had not fully abandoned. He saw the Arab ownership of most of the land as a crucial problem that needed to be eradicated, also because he did not believe the Arabs had essentially more rights to the land than the Jews.²⁵⁹ Nonetheless, assigning to Zangwill the label of a pioneer of Palestinian expulsion rhetoric would be overstating the case. To make such an "accusation" would also mean to unjustly disregard the writer's universalist humanitarian sensibilities. As Salaman wrote in a footnote to his earlier-quoted second letter, Zangwill later explained to him in a private conversation how his remarks on the subject had been generally misunderstood.²⁶⁰ Zangwill had imagined the emergence of a new grand Arab nation within a peaceful world order. The Palestinian Arabs, who understood politics very well, would leave for such a place out of their own free will, especially if they would be compensated for the land they left behind.²⁶¹ At the same time, Zangwill's claim that only a resettlement of the Arab population would open the opportunity for a Jewish state could also be seen as a reinforcement of his Territorialist beliefs: in an ideal world, the Arabs themselves would leave voluntarily. Unfortunately, in reality they were not willing to do so, which made Palestine an unfeasible home for the Jews.²⁶² Zangwill thus implicitly argued that a Territorialist

²⁵⁷ For example, Shlomo Avineri demonstrates such a view of Jabotinsky as essentially hostile to Arabs: Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 179. By contrast, Avi Shlaim has described Jabotinsky's Iron Wall policy not as a goal in itself, but as a means to break Arab resistance. Jabotinsky felt it necessary to take a strong position to show the Arab population that the Jewish state was inevitable, without this meaning that there could be no political autonomy for the Arabs after Jewish statehood had been realised: Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London: Penguin, 2001), 12-16. As for Zangwill, Teveth credits him for having first proposed an Arab transfer, but whereas he "redeems" the other main Zionists (a.o. Nordau and Syrkin) who have been unjustly depicted as early proponents of such a transfer, Zangwill remains the transfer evildoer: Teveth, *The Evolution*, 2-3.

²⁵⁸ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 281.

²⁵⁹ Alroey, "Mesopotamia," 925-6, 931. By contrast, another important early Territorialist, Hillel Zeitlin, felt that as a Jew he had as much right to Palestine as he had to Paris or London. This was why the Zionist project was doomed to fail. Quoted in Alroey, "Mesopotamia," 927.

²⁶⁰ Salaman, *Palestine Reclaimed*, 175, n. 6.

²⁶¹ Zangwill, "Watchman", 34-5, 36, 45-6.

²⁶² *Provincial Yorkshire Post* clipping, supplied by the *Press Association*, (27 June 1921). CZA A120/5; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 113.

alternative was still a necessity.²⁶³

Zangwill complained that because of the Zionist inability to solve the Arab Question, the 1917 Balfour Declaration “was like offering a home of his own to a tramp in a crowded lodging-house”.²⁶⁴ In the early 1920s, Zangwill bitterly recalled: “The Zionists, who had overlooked such an obscure feature of the Palestine landscape as 600,000 Arabs, are consoling themselves for the massacres [of Jews by Arabs] by pointing to my humble self as the cause.”²⁶⁵ He also warned others and wrote to Jabotinsky in 1924 that “[a]ny agitation to-day in Europe for increasing the Jewish power and numbers in Palestine will be countered by an increasing Arab opposition, perhaps more pogroms, and for this you would be made responsible”.²⁶⁶

Conclusion

Territorialism was born as a product of Zionism. Indeed, the first Territorialists believed they continued Herzl’s legacy. Before long, however, it became clear that Territorialism was not just a defected branch of Zionism, but a wholly new Jewish political movement in its own right. The widening of the divide between the two movements was partly due to the fierce opposition campaign the Zionists waged against their new rivals. Moreover, even though the ITO’s founding members believed themselves to be the true Zionists, almost immediately after its foundation the Territorialist organisation attracted notable anti-Zionists such as Lucien Wolf into its ranks. The character of the movement was further defined independently through the inclusion of voices from Eastern Europe. Admittedly, the ITO was born within a Western European Jewish political context, but Zangwill needed the active support of especially his Russian colleagues, many of whom had not been affiliated with Zionism before joining the ITO. All of these factors—Zionist opposition, the influence of anti-Zionists within the movement, and the importance of non-Zionist, Eastern European Territorialists—contributed to the development of the ITO

²⁶³ Zangwill’s most recent biographer, Meri-Jane Rochelson, names Zangwill’s position regarding the Arab Question as one of several aspects of his ideas that have been generally used out of context. This is partly due to the repeated appearance on the internet of some of his famous quotations like “A land without a people for a people without a land” —according to Hannah Arendt, only to be found on the moon: Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 4, 165-6. See also Rochelson, “Zionism, Territorialism,” 154-5; Kohn, “Preface,” xxx, n. 16; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 83-4.

²⁶⁴ *Publisher’s Circular*, (29 January 1921), CZA A120/5.

²⁶⁵ Roth and Zangwill, *Now and Forever*, 18-9.

²⁶⁶ Zangwill to Vladimir Jabotinsky, 1 April 1924, CZA A120/219, pp. 4-5.

into a self-standing political organisation that did not directly identify with Zionism. Rather, it became part of a broader Jewish political landscape. This landscape was not as diverse and sectarian in the movement's home in the West as it was in the East, but the ITO-years did allow for the seeds of the later wave of Territorialism to be sown in the Eastern European political soil. This chapter's exploration of the first phase of Territorialist history thus supports my claim that the story of Jewish Territorialism forms an indispensable part of a larger narrative of Jewish political behaviour.

The analysis set out in this chapter has also sought to support the second main claim of this study, namely that Territorialism's history sheds light on larger geopolitical trends and discourses. An example of such a trend in the ITO-period is formed by the movement's explicit reliance on (British) imperial structures and outlooks. Also notable are Zangwill's ambivalent toying with, but eventual rejection of racist categorisations of Eastern European Jews and, paradoxically, his at times blatantly racist expressions regarding the native populations of colonial lands. A somewhat related and much-contested topic is that of Zangwill's comments on the "Arab Question" and his supposed early proposal to forcibly transfer the Arabs from Palestine. His utterances on this topic created the perception of the ITO-leader as "militant" and anti-Arab. In reality, however, Zangwill simply believed that the Arab presence prevented any option for Jewish statehood in Palestine from materialising. Immediately after the end of the First World War, he claimed during the early 1920s, the Zionists could have exploited the geopolitical situation to make a compelling case for the Arabs to leave willingly. The Zionist leadership had failed to seize this opportunity. Now that all hope was lost for an easy solution to the Arab issue, Zangwill believed that Zionism had failed indefinitely and was to be held responsible for any future blood shedding in Palestine. Only Territorialism remained a realistic path towards a solution to Jewish homelessness.

Chapter 3: The Freeland League in the Interwar Years

Introduction

Nine years of apparent silence passed before Territorialism's "state of suspended animation" came to an end. The growing European anti-Semitism of the interwar years increasingly complicated Jewish life in Europe. Therefore, in April 1934, Simon J. Woolf wrote to newspaper publisher Leopold Kessler that former ITO-members T.B. Herwald and Cyril Henriques planned to revive their old organisation. Woolf had reached an agreement with James N. Rosenberg and Joseph Rosen of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or Joint) that if the new ITO, together with a Paris branch that was already in formation, would acquire a land concession for a Jewish autonomous settlement, the Joint would take care of all the finances.¹ Despite the fact that he would soon become an active Territorialist again, Kessler's initial reply was negative. He stated that such a revival would be

contrary to the decision of the meeting held at your house under Dr. [Moses] Gaster's presidency. The opinion of that meeting [...] was that it would be a mistake to revive an organisation which even under the leadership of Israel Zangwill created a good deal of hostility and was unable to survive.²

If the Territorialist movement had to be resuscitated nonetheless, Kessler suggested none other than Vladimir Jabotinsky as its leader.³ Indeed, as we have seen, Zangwill and Jabotinsky had known each other quite well. Moreover, in 1943, Freeland Joseph Leftwich stated that "[s]ome of the Revisionists are really Territorialists".⁴

Whereas some British Territorialists may have been reluctant to revive the movement, the growing anti-Semitic measures on the European continent rendered such doubts obsolete. In 1934, the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation was founded in Warsaw. This was not a spontaneous decision, as the older ITO branch in Poland had been already revived in 1931 in the shape of the Organizir Grupe fun der Yidisher Teritorialistischer Organitzatziye (ITO) in Poyln (Organising Group of the

¹ S.J. Woolf to L. Kessler, 5 April 1934, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

² Kessler to Woolf, 7 April 1934, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Leftwich to Herwald, 20 January 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

Jewish Territorialist Organisation (ITO) in Poland, or, in Polish: Grupa Organizacyjna Żydowskiej Organizacji Teritorialistycznej (I.T.O.) ‘w Polsce’.⁵ In contrast to its predecessor’s activities, in its founding text, the new ITO stated as its main aim the betterment of the Jewish *economic* position in Eastern Europe. Its efforts to promote Jewish mass emigration were secondary.⁶

One of the central figures of the new Territorialist organisation was Ben-Adir, whom we already met in Chapter 1. Credited by some as the Freeland League’s main initial ideologue, Ben-Adir was a self-proclaimed ideological heir to Zangwill. It was most probably another Polish Territorialist, Zalman Majzner,⁷ secretary to the provisional secretariat of the Freeland League in Warsaw, who coined the name “Frayland”, inspired by Theodor Hertzka’s utopian novel entitled *Freiland, ein soziales Zukunftsbild* (1890). (Indeed, Hertzka’s name was not only strikingly similar to that of the Zionist leader, but, like Herzl, Hertzka was a Hungarian-born intellectual and wrote for the same periodical.)⁸

Territorialism was thus largely shaped and reshaped in Poland during these first years of its second incarnation: “With its ideological restlessness [...] the Freeland idea separated itself sharply from the peaceful, settled, dogma-ridden atmosphere [of established Polish-Jewish politics].”⁹ Poland had also been the birthplace of Syrkin’s Socialist Territorialism. According to L. Lapin (possibly the poet Berl Lapin), who published a short history of Polish Territorialism in the periodical *Freeland* in 1947, the rebirth of Territorialism in the shape of the Freeland League was anticipated by several small groups that came into existence before the end of 1933 in the cities and towns of Warsaw, Wilna, Łódź, Radomsk, Grodna, Pruzany, and Novogrudek.¹⁰

After the official founding of the movement in late 1933 or early 1934, several periodicals were published, most notably *Frayland* (Warsaw) in 1934. Contributors to

⁵ Folder ‘Frayland Poyln, Forgeschichte’ with several letters: [J] Fogelnest to Herwald, 30 November 1931; Kh. A. Zukerman to T.B. Herwald, 31 November 1931 and 22 December 1931; Fogelnest and Zukerman to Herwald, 21 January 1932, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁶ [J] Fogelnest, ‘Benayung fun der Teritorialistischer Organisatziye’, [newspaper clipping 1931], YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁷ Born in Warsaw in 1882, Szlojma Zalman Majzner (or: Maysner/Maisner/Meisner) was best known as an anti-Nazi and anti-Bolshevik political journalist. For several years he was active as a member of the Executive of the Jewish Zionist Socialist Labor Party, before turning to Territorialism. In 1939, Majzner fled to Wilno, but found his life in danger again and was eventually killed when the Soviets occupied that city: Note by D. Lvovitch, 18 January 1941, YIVO RG554, Box 3; Z. Majzner to the Freeland League, London, 5 November 1939, YIVO RG366/440-446.

⁸ Zalman Majzner to the Frayland Liga Polish central bureau in Warsaw, 13 September 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1. For more on Hertzka’s novel, see: Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 47-9.

⁹ L. Lapin, ‘Freeland in Poland’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 8, 16: 8.

¹⁰ Ibid.

this short-lived publication were Ben-Adir, Joseph Czernichow, Michael Astour, Chaim Zhitlowsky, Zelig Kalmanovitch, and Alfred Döblin. Moreover, two youth branches were formed: “Shparber” (Hawk) and “Yuf” (Young Freeland).¹¹ At its height, the Warsaw Freeland branch had some 800 members, of whom about 100 made up an orthodox Jewish sub-group. The Wilna youth branch counted 250 members. In 1939, the German occupation of Poland cut off the Polish Freelanders from their colleagues in other countries. Majzner’s last message to the Freeland League in London arrived in the summer of 1940. In this letter, he asked for food packages on behalf of Hillel Zeitlin, the leader of the 50 remaining Territorialists in Warsaw. Nothing was heard of them since, and by 1947, the exact fate of some of the Polish Freelanders was still unknown in the West.¹²

The rebirth of Territorialism through the foundation of the Polish Freeland League in 1934 was soon followed by the simultaneous establishment of other branches in Paris and in London.¹³ A German group was also founded, consisting mainly of intellectuals. It organised a geographical commission and investigated options in British Columbia and East-Peru. One of its leaders, Max Apt, came up with a plan to set up an “Agrarbank” (farmer’s bank) to finance the future colonisation. This suggestion would find its way into future Freeland schemes as well. The German Territorialists were eager to cooperate with the other branches, but limitations set in the Third Reich by the Gestapo made such cooperation practically impossible: the German Freelanders would not get to play a significant role in the interwar Freeland movement.¹⁴

The initial idea was to have a division of tasks in which the Warsaw bureau of the Frayland Liga¹⁵ would take care of Eastern European affairs, while Paris focused on Western Europe. At the same time, plans were made to send another central Frayland-figure, Joseph Czernichow, to the United States for propaganda work.¹⁶ Due to the deteriorating political circumstances in continental Europe, the headquarters of the new

¹¹ Michael Astour, ‘Ten Years Ago. A Memorial Reminiscence Of Dr. I.N. Steinberg’, *Freeland* 20, no. 1 (Jan. 1967): 5-8: 5.

¹² L. Lapin, ‘Freeland in Poland’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 8, 16. Hillel Zeitlin perished while being deported to Treblinka in 1942: Willy Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg in London Und New York*, vol. 40, Russica Palatina (Heidelberg: 2002), 82.

¹³ The French Freelanders did not always include the word “Frayland” or “Freeland” in their name, but simple referred to themselves as the “Ligue Territorialist Juive” (Jewish Territorialist League).

¹⁴ Half-torn German text about a German Territorialist Group, [no date], YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁵ I refer to the organisation as “Frayland Liga” and “Freeland League” interchangeably, depending on the language (mainly Yiddish or English) of the sources under consideration.

¹⁶ Zalman Majzner to the Frayland Liga Polish central bureau in Warsaw, 23 September 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

organisation were soon moved to London; the Polish offices had been anyway meant to be provisional from the outset.¹⁷ In 1937, Leftwich described the reason for Territorialism's rebirth:

The Freeland movement rose not as the result of any intellectual desire to start a new organization, but, as Zangwill had predicted when the Ito wound up twelve years ago, because the pressure of tragic events had brought to the surface the solution of the Jewish question. That question was no longer an ideological problem, but one of stark, desperate need.¹⁸

This need was still mainly perceived as a continental phenomenon, excluding British and American Jews.¹⁹ However, despite the once again strong Anglo-Jewish presence in the revived organisation, the Territorialist leadership did no longer mainly consist of Anglo-Saxon Jews.²⁰ Now, for the first time, Territorialist leaders resided also in Central and Eastern Europe and thus experienced the urgency for an imminent solution for themselves.

To bring together the different Territorialists, these leaders organised several conferences.²¹ In July 1935, the first international Freeland League conference took place in London with representatives from Warsaw, the U.K., Germany, Switzerland and the United States. The list of attendees shows some famous names. In addition to Territorialists Kessler (London), Czernichow (Warsaw), Josef Kruk (Warsaw), and ORT-leaders David Lvovitch and Aaron Syngalovsky (Paris), present were former chief-Rabbi of the Sephardic community of London and honorary president of the Freeland League Moses Gaster, Chaim Zhitlowsky, Edith Zangwill, and author Alfred Döblin.²² The list of honorary vice-presidents of the newly established International Council of Friends of the Freeland Movement also shows an impressive collection of names, such as those of writer

¹⁷ Majzner to Frayland Liga Polish central Bureau in Warsaw, 6 December 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁸ Joseph Leftwich, 'Jewish Freeland Movement: Securing Areas for Close Settlement. A stark, deperate need', *Jewish Chronicle*, (5 February 1937), CZA A330/86.

¹⁹ T.B. Herwald to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Morning Post*, [June 1938], YIVO RG255, Box 2.

²⁰ Leftwich to [?] David Lvovitch, 20 January 1937, CZA A330/13.

²¹ For instance between 12 and 14 November 1937 in Paris: Documentation pertaining to the Paris Freeland League conference, 12-14 November 1937, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²² 'Freeland Movement. League for Territorial Colonisation'. Report first international conference at Hotel Russell London, 17-21 July 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1. In 1955, Steinberg described Aaron Syngalowsky as an ex-Territorialist whose defeatist attitude regarding Territorialist initiatives Steinberg deplored: Steinberg, 'That Hardy Plant – Territorialism', *Freeland* 8, no. 10 (April-May 1955): 2.

Louis Golding, philosopher Bertrand Russell, communist publisher Victor Gollancz, and feminist politician Eleanor Rathbone.²³

The U.K.-based Freelanders initially wanted to retain the old name of the ITO, but some members, most notably Leopold Kessler, felt it better to make a fresh start in order not to antagonise the Zionists. The Territorialists therefore switched to the name that was already in use on the continent: the Frayland Liga or Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation.²⁴ On the one hand, like the ITO, the Freeland League attempted to contact different governments to attain a territory for Jewish colonisation. On the other hand, the political aspirations had somewhat dimmed, as the “New Territorialists” accurately concluded that such demands had severely limited the ITO’s chances of success. In the political world of the mid 1930s, a wish for political autonomy was no longer tenable.²⁵ This new approach notwithstanding, different ideas about the autonomy clause would still divide the ranks. For example, in contrast to the British Territorialists, their French counterparts attached great value to a certain degree of political autonomy for the Jews in the prospected settlement(s).²⁶

As the ITO had done before them, the New Territorialists also gathered a colourful group of adherents from beyond the British political sphere. These supporters often had different connections to Jewish religion and tradition: “Each of us came to the cause from quite different spiritual circles, yet our common concern for Jewish suffering bound us together to a great effort on constructive lines.”²⁷ Affiliated with the League were writers Stefan Zweig, Alfred Döblin,²⁸ Jewish-American religious leader and scholar Cyrus Adler,

²³ The other names are: M.P. Vyvyan Adams, M.P. Lord Arnold, Mrs. Eleanor Barton, M.P. Vernon Bartlett, the Dean of Canterbury, Canon F. Lewis Donaldson, W.N. Ewer, M.P. Gwilyn Lloyd George, M.P. Morgan Jones, F.W. Jowett, Leopold Kessler, Lord Mamhead (Robert Hunt Stapylton Dudley Lydston Newman), Lord Marley, M.P. James Maxton, J.B. Priestley, Redcliffe Salaman, Lord Sanderson, R.H. Tawney, M.P. J.C. Wedgewood, and Edith Zangwill: ‘Freeland Movement. League for Territorial Colonisation’. Report first international conference at Hotel Russell London, 17-21 July 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²⁴ Black book with the minutes of the British department of the Freeland League, 1935-6: meeting 14 January 1936, CZA A330/14. Interestingly, for some time after the war, the British Territorialists again used the name ‘ITO’ in their letterheads: T.B. Herwald to Steinberg, 16 June 1946, YIVO RG255, Box 1. See also Invite card ITO meeting with Gabriel House [Haus], T.B. Herwald, M. Pinnes, H. Spivack and Joseph Leftwich, 14 January 1943, Royal Hotel, London, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²⁵ For a short history of the Freeland League, see the English summary in Alexander Heldring, *Het Saramacca Project. Een Plan Van Joodse Kolonisatie in Suriname* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2011), 320-3. See also Isaac Steinberg’s account of the Freeland League’s history in Vasos I. Vlavianos and Feliks Gross, *Struggle for Tomorrow: Modern Political Ideologies of the Jewish People* (New York: Arts, Incorporated, 1954), 119; D. Gouldman of Manchester to Leftwich, 14 November 1935, CZA A330/14.

²⁶ Leftwich to dr. [B.] Brutzkus, 1 March 1937, CZA A330/14.

²⁷ Steinberg to Charles Seligman, [1951], YIVO RG682/826.

²⁸ In a 1933 publication on the future of Judaism, Döblin showed himself to be a supporter of the Territorialist cause: Alfred Döblin, *Jüdische Erneuerung* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1933), 61-2.

and American religious leader Stephen Wise.²⁹ The famous anti-Zionist American-Jewish journalist William Zu[c]kerman praised the Freeland League by stating that it

is the best organised and most intelligently led territorialist movement in Europe. It has not merely a rather vague, sympathetic sentiment behind it (as a good many of other movements of this type have), but also a considerable organisation, a number of well-known European-Jewish leaders whose sincerity cannot be questioned, several monthly publications and an undoubted following in Poland[.]³⁰

In practical terms, the financial aspect of the Freeland work would be based on a business model. As soon as a location would be assured, a Jewish Migration and Settlement bank would have to be set up and financiers attracted. Despite the explicitly “agro-industrial” nature of the prospected settlement, Steinberg imagined Jews with all types of professions to settle there:

One need only wander through the streets of the unhappy Jewish towns and villages of Eastern Europe to grasp how much valuable human material is concentrated there, how many real talents and noble souls breathe among these millions. How eager they are for honest work and life, these weavers from Lodz and Bialystok, these tailors, carpenters, and bricklayers from Vilna or Warsaw, these professionals from Kovno, Bucharest, Kishineff, Riga, Vienna, and from Germany. How necessary, how urgent it is to enable them to develop fully all their capacities in pioneer work with a worthy aim to benefit of themselves, of Jewry, and

²⁹ Joseph Leftwich, ‘Israel was a man’, *B’nai Brith Magazine* (January 1937), CZA A330/4. Stefan Zweig wrote the introduction to Joseph Leftwich’s 1936 Territorialist publication *What will happen to the Jews?*; Black book with the minutes of the British department of the Freeland League, 1935-6, CZA A330/14; Joseph Leftwich, *What Will Happen to the Jews?* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1936).

³⁰ William Zu[c]kerman, ‘Territories’, draft article attached to letter to Steinberg, [1938], YIVO RG366/479. We already encountered another newspaperman (of *The Jewish Chronicle*), the British-South African Leopold Kessler (1864-1944), who was one of the initiators of the new Freeland League and acted as Chairman to the Executive from 1937 until October 1943: Report of meeting Kessler, T.B. Herwald, Steinberg and Myer Nathan, 30 November 1937, YIVO RG682/300; ‘Freeland Movement. League for Territorial Colonisation’. Report first international conference at Hotel Russell London, 17-21 July 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1; Kessler to S.J. Woolf, 7 April 1934, YIVO RG255, Box 1. This is all the more interesting as Kessler, a ‘Uganda-sceptic’ in 1905 and head of the Zionist El-Arish expedition in 1903, had also headed the English Zionist Federation, and acted as Chairman of the Jewish National Fund during the 1910s.

the world at large.³¹

The Freeland League investigated several options for Jewish settlement before the war, of which French and British Guiana as well as Ecuador were most frequently mentioned.³² Only shortly before, in 1934 and 1935, the option had been discussed to settle the Assyrians of Iraq in British Guiana.³³ Even though in this case the eventual conclusion had been that the area was unfavourable to such settlement projects, the Freeland League used these suggestions as proof of precedent for their own plans. The response seemed promising: in 1939, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain stated that

[i]n such an event [that the plan to establish a Jewish settlement on 40,000 square miles in British Guiana would materialise] its status and position would clearly become such as to warrant the grant of a large measure of autonomy in local government and the necessary provision for its adequate representation in the Government of the Colony as a whole.³⁴

The same year, an Anglo-American expedition, unconnected to the Freeland League, was sent to explore the region for the purpose of settling Jewish refugees.³⁵ The issuing of the expedition's report coincided with the British White Paper. This may cynically explain the political motive for the Anglo-British interest in the scheme: it could divert Jewish immigrants from Palestine. Nonetheless, even if British Guiana was not the most attractive destination for Jewish settlers, the Freeland League did feel that the apparent seriousness of this British offer made it worthwhile considering.³⁶

The Territorialists' focus during these years was not solely on Guiana. Other options that were considered were the French colonial territories in New Caledonia and

³¹ Isaac N. Steinberg, 'Where Are the Jews to Go? The Immigration Problem, Empty Spaces in the British Empire, the New Territorialism', *The Jewish Chronicle* (1937); reprinted in Willy Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg in London Und New York*, vol. 40, Russica Palatina (Heidelberg: 2002), 34.

³² See for instance the documentation in YIVO RG255, Box 1.

³³ 'Short account of the tour of the mission in British Guiana November 1934 to January 1935 (proposed settlement of Assyrians)', [1935], YIVO RG554, Box 1; 'League of Nations. Settlement of the Assyrians of Iraq. Report by the Committee to the Council on The action taken in regard to the project for settling the Assyrians in British Guiana', 18 May 1935, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

³⁴ Quoted in: Text by Herwald [no title] about necessity Territorialism, [1943], YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³⁵ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 188.

³⁶ Unknown author, 'British Guiana', 22 December 1938, YIVO RG554, Box 1; W. Fancourt (assistant British Passport Control Officer) to Miss Razovsky (National Coordinating Committee for German Refugees New York), 19 January 1939, YIVO RG554, Box 1; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 189.

the New Hebrides,³⁷ parts of Peru, Venezuela, Somaliland, the Dominican Republic,³⁸ Alaska,³⁹ Papua,⁴⁰ and Brazil. Previously explored locations, such as in Cyrenaica and Angola, were revisited, but discarded.⁴¹ In early 1935, the Lisbon-based Wulf Gotz had written to French-Russian Territorialist Dubossarsky that Angola, which had featured so highly on the ITO's wish list, was no longer a favourable destination for Jews. This was due to the political situation in Portugal, where a dictatorship had been established. Moreover, there existed a fear in the Portuguese colony of German expansionist and Russian bolshevist Jews.⁴² Also Ecuador met with internal political opposition, based on the explicitly Jewish nature of the prospected immigration project.⁴³

Australia

The two options most (in)famously explored were Australia and Madagascar. Australia was obviously not new as an emigration destination and had been considered by Zangwill in 1907 and 1908.⁴⁴ Directly following the First World War, Australia was even mentioned as an ideal escape from persecution for Armenians, whose fate has been considered to be similar to that of the Jews.⁴⁵ The years between 1939 and 1943 Freeland-leader Isaac Steinberg spent in Australia, lobbying for the realisation of a Jewish colony in the East Kimberley district, more or less the size of Belgium,⁴⁶ in the northwest of the country.⁴⁷ Yiddish writer Melech Ravitch, who would become a Freeland-adept the following year, had visited Australia in 1933. His prose and reports inspired the

³⁷ Statement French minister of colonies Marius Moutet in *Le Petit Parisien*, (16 January 1937).

³⁸ Press clipping, [source unknown], 28 December 1940, CZA A330/86.

³⁹ Press clippings about Steinberg in Australia, 7 November 1939 and 1 December 1939, CZA A330/86.

⁴⁰ G.E.W. Lea, 'A Greater – Palestine Jewish Dominion' (London, November 1938), YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁴¹ Herwald to Creech Jones, 18 December 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁴² Wulf Gotz to [?] Dubossarsky, 10 February 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁴³ Kruk to W.N. Ewer (*Daily Herald* and 'friend' of Freeland), 10 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁴⁴ Leon Gettler, *An Unpromised Land* (South Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1993), 32.

⁴⁵ Peter Gatrell, "Trajectories of Population Displacement in the Aftermaths of Two World Wars," in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 10. Most notably and recently, Anthony Smith has explored and reinforced this analogy between Jews and Armenians: Anthony D. Smith, "Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism," *Israel Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1995): 11. Already in 1909, Zangwill drew the parallel between the fates of Jews and Armenians: Israel Zangwill, "Be Fruitful and Multiply," ed. Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO) (London 1909), 1.

⁴⁶ Leila Nash Danciger's letter to the reader in 'Letters to the Editor', *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 24.

⁴⁷ For more about the Kimberley scheme, see the relevant parts of Rovner's chapter 'New Jerusalem, Down Under: Port Davey, Tasmania (1940-1945)': Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 149-159; Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*; as well as Steinberg's own account of the project: Isaac Nachman Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land: In Search of a Home* (London: V. Gollancz, 1948).

Territorialist initiative,⁴⁸ and Joseph Leftwich established the first contacts with Australian representatives in 1936.⁴⁹ When a more concrete plan was first presented in 1938, the Freeland League in London formed a special committee consisting of influential Anglo-Jewish figures such as Robert Waley Cohen,⁵⁰ the ethnologist Sir Charles Seligman, and Charles Sebag-Montefiore.

Shortly thereafter, Steinberg was sent on his propaganda tour to Australia, which would last for four years, partly due to the outbreak of the war. The trip generated multiple publications in both Territorialist and Australian periodicals and newspapers,⁵¹ as well as support from local newspapers such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *West Australian*, prominent trade union movements, and from religious leaders. Suzanne Rutland ascribes this broad support mainly to Steinberg's own charismatic personality, thereby refuting the claim that his Leninist past—to which we will return below—had fueled some of the opposition to the plan. During his time in Australia, Steinberg also contributed to the development of the local Yiddish cultural scene and Jewish political reforms, as well as to the setting up of overseas relief funds.⁵²

Steinberg's approach was simple and in line with his socialist-revolutionary convictions: first, one needed to win over public opinion and garner as much societal support as possible, before presenting an official proposal to government representatives.⁵³ In late 1941, the Australian federal government was approached after an initial agreement had been reached with the Western Australian government. However, the outbreak of war led to the eventual failure of the project. The lukewarm reception of the plan by the Australian Jewish community in general, and the outright rejection of it by Australian Zionists, contributed to the rejection of the proposal by the federal government in 1944, despite predominantly favourable opinions amongst the Australians themselves.⁵⁴ The Australian government was unwilling to depart from its

⁴⁸ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 149-153, 156.

⁴⁹ Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 50.

⁵⁰ Waley Cohen would continue to support the Freeland League activities until his death in 1952, despite the fact that, according to Steinberg, he was far removed from the movement's ideological background: 'In Memoriam', *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 11-12.

⁵¹ Steinberg, 'The Three Roads', *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 1-3; 2

⁵² Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2001), 183-4, 211, 218, 222-3; Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 74, 103-4.

⁵³ Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 108-9.

⁵⁴ Ibid., ch. 6; Heldring, *Het Saramacca Project*, 30-6; *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) Bulletin*, [no date], CZA A330/86; Editorial, *Freeland* (August 1944): 2-6. In late 1944, Steinberg stated that a [Gallup] poll in 6 states showed 37% in favour, 16% undecided, and 47% in favour of individual immigration of Jews: Steinberg, 'In Reply to Australia', *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 6; *Statement by Dr. I.N. Steinberg and*

established policy that was against group settlement.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the Freeland League kept hoping and arguing for the Kimberley scheme to materialise. After 1944, the movement's most active members repeatedly published on Australia in the Freeland periodicals.⁵⁶

*Madagascar*⁵⁷

The second important pre-war Freeland plan focused on Madagascar. In 1936, the Freeland League opened negotiations with French colonial minister Marius Moutet regarding Territorialist options in the French overseas territories.⁵⁸ These talks led to a speech by Moutet, published in *Le Petit Parisien* on 16 January 1937, in which he declared that the Léon Blum-government was willing to investigate Madagascar, French Guiana, the New Hebrides and New Caledonia as places of settlement for Jewish refugees.⁵⁹ Of all these territories, Madagascar was the one that evoked the strongest reactions. This sensitivity was partly due to the fact that multiple actors simultaneously explored the option of sending Jews to Madagascar: not only the Freeland League, but also the Nazis, the Polish government, and even World Jewish Congress-leader Nahum Goldmann

Discussion before the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine, January 14, 1946, Washington D.C., ed. Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization (1946), 20: *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 11; Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 145, 170, n.32.

⁵⁵ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 183.

⁵⁶ For instance: Steinberg, 'Facing Realities', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 1-2; 'Freeland Public Meeting', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 20-1. A lesser-known plan focused on settling Jews on Tasmania, and was suggested to Steinberg by a woman named Caroline Isaacson when the Kimberley scheme seemed doomed to fail in 1940. Tasmania never became a realistic option, but it did form the background for a tragically romantic story featuring the young Critchley Parker Junior, who died while exploring the region in an attempt to impress Isaacson: Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 159-181; Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 122-45. By 1948, Steinberg, in his published account of his endeavours, admitted that the Australia plan had failed: Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 7.

⁵⁷ For an extensive study of Madagascar as a place for Jewish settlement or exile, and especially of the Nazi Madagascar plans, see: Hans Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan: De Voorgenomen Deportatie van Europese Joden Naar Madagascar* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 1996); Magnus Brechtken, *Madagaskar für die Juden: Antisemitische Idee und Politische Praxis 1885-1945* (München: Oldenbourg, 1997). For more on the Freeland League's Madagascar scheme, see Rovner's chapter 'The Lost Jewish Continent: Madagascar (1933-1942)', in Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 117-147.

⁵⁸ 'A Zionist In Search Of Territories', *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 16.

⁵⁹ Vicky Caron traces the idea of sending Jews to French overseas territories back to 1935, when the French Minister of the Interior, Marcel Régnier, suggested these areas as outlets for poor Jewish refugees who were being held in French prisons. The plan was eventually rejected: Vicki Caron, *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 144, 149. Moutet's relative openness could also be explained by his opposition to Blum's willingness to appease Nazi Germany by potentially granting it some of the French colonial possessions: Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 340-1.

considered the island for Jewish settlement.⁶⁰ The resonance of Madagascar can also be explained by the much older myth about the Jewish origins of the indigenous population of Madagascar, which was believed to descend from one of the lost Hebrew tribes.⁶¹

Madagascar, although according to Leftwich never a purely Territorialist initiative, was even discussed at the unsuccessful Evian Conference in 1938, which aimed to find a solution for the European refugee crisis. Steinberg attended the conference, together with Leopold Kessler.⁶² The island also obtained a darker connotation: several British fascists took great interest into its Jewish settlement potential,⁶³ as did the Polish government, and eventually and most notably even the Nazis: between 1940 and the Wannsee conference in January 1942, some members of the Nazi leadership propagated the evacuation of all the German Jews to Madagascar, turning the idea into an anti-Semitic solution to the *Judenfrage*, before this solution became defined in mass murderous terms as the “final solution”.⁶⁴ Historians have disagreed over the question whether Madagascar was ever a serious option for the Nazi leadership, or if it served as a smoke screen for the genocidal program that had been developed all along.⁶⁵ Without deciding in favour of either of these two camps, we can still conclude that the Nazi involvement seriously discredited any Jewish colonisation plans on the island in the eyes of its contemporaries.

The Madagascar deliberations also negatively influenced the stance in Poland towards the Freeland work. Even though the Joint despatched its representative Max

⁶⁰ Eric Thomas Jennings, "Writing Madagascar Back into the Madagascar Plan," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 21, no. 2 (2007): 203-4.

⁶¹ Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 45-7; Jennings, "Writing Madagascar," 192-200. The Zaky Ibrahim (a Malagasi tribe)-as-crypto-Jews theory does not stand alone in history. Similar connections were made in the cases of the Ethiopian Jews and of the Chinese Kaifeng Jews: Jennings, "Writing Madagascar," 193.

⁶² Drafts of articles Leftwich, [1937], CZA A330/13; Alec Golodetz to Leftwich, 10 January 1936, CZA A330/13; several published and unpublished documents referring to the Ecuador option, CZA A330/13; translation of a letter by Z. Majzner [provisional secretary of the Freeland League] to Leftwich, 21 October 1935, CZA A330/13; M.D. Eder, 'Cyrenaica', 1932, CZA A330/14; Steinberg to Col. T.W. White (the Australian representative at the Evian Conference), 29 June 1938, YIVO RG366/479; Freeland League to Myron C. Taylor (Chairman at Evian), 24 June 1938, YIVO RG366/71.

⁶³ Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 94-5.

⁶⁴ Joseph Leftwich, article on the Nazi Madagascar scheme, *The Jewish Standard* (18 September 1942), CZA A330/14.

⁶⁵ Jansen argues against the “smoke screen” thesis by providing evidence that until 1942 the plan was really on the Nazi leadership’s mind. Jennings, however, holds that even a “dumping ground” or punishment approach on the part of the Nazis would already have been genocidal in character. Perhaps, Jennings claims, Madagascar was not the Final Solution, but it certainly was a penultimate one: in the Nazi’s imagination Jews would perish within several generations on the African island. Like Jansen, Peter Longerich believes that the Nazis were serious about Madagascar and did not use it as “distraction tactics”, but he also considers the fact that several key figures in the Nazi “euthanasia programme” were to be put in charge of the Madagascar project as casting the whole scheme “in a very dark light indeed”: Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 187-8; Jennings, "Writing Madagascar"; Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: the Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 164.

Sonnenberg to head an investigation of the island in 1937,⁶⁶ Polish Jews saw an “evacuation” of Jews to remote tropical, colonial lands as playing into the hands of the Polish government and the Polish anti-Semites.⁶⁷ Jewish organisations feared that a potentially dangerous precedent would be created if Jews were forced into exile on the whim of one of their governments.⁶⁸

The Territorialists themselves also preferred to keep their distance from any Polish governmental involvement. In 1939, Steinberg wrote to ask whether the rumours were true that Daniel Wolf of JewCol, a Dutch-Jewish colonisation organisation, had been approached by a Polish colonisation society unaffiliated with the Freeland League. According to Steinberg, this body was set up as a tool by the Polish government to evacuate Polish Jews on anti-Semitic grounds. He urged Wolf not to get involved.⁶⁹

This suspicion of Polish anti-Semitic ambitions was not unfounded. Already in 1926, the Polish ambassador to France, Count Alfred Chłapowski, had approached the French government to inquire about the possibilities for migration to Madagascar.⁷⁰ Jews were not explicitly mentioned, but in 1937, more or less simultaneously with the Freeland League’s negotiations with the French and much to the Territorialists’ concern, the Polish foreign office mentioned Madagascar as a serious option for Polish-Jewish immigration. Moutet’s statement in January was welcomed by the Poles as a solution to their Jewish “problem”, even though the French minister had never even mentioned Poland or Polish Jews. Nonetheless, the year before, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Beck had discussed the potential transfer of Polish Jews to Madagascar with both his French counterpart Yvon Delbos and with president Léon Blum.⁷¹ Major Mieczysław Lepecki, accompanied by two Polish Jews, even undertook an expedition to Madagascar.⁷² As of late 1938, the Polish government pressured Polish Jews to set up a Commission for the Promotion of Jewish Pioneer Work and Colonisation, focused on Madagascar and

⁶⁶ Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 151.

⁶⁷ Leftwich to Lvovitch, 20 January 1937, CZA A330/13. Prominent Polish-Zionist leader Aryeh Tartakower denounced the plan: Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 153.

⁶⁸ Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 151; Jennings, “Writing Madagascar,” 188.

⁶⁹ Steinberg to Van Leeuwen, 4 January 1939 and 5 January 1939, YIVO RG366/493.

⁷⁰ [Unknown author], Memorandum ‘Madagascar’, 8 April 1941, YIVO RG366/584.

⁷¹ Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 149. On 13 September 1934, Beck delivered a notorious speech before the League of Nations assembly, in which he repudiated Poland’s obligations regarding minority rights protection: Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 340. Beck’s interest in the “evacuation” of Polish Jews only two years later fits into this trend.

⁷² Press clipping ‘Madagascar Scheme announced’ [source unknown], December 1937, CZA A330/86; [Unknown author], Memorandum ‘Madagascar’, 8 April 1941, YIVO RG366/584.

Kenya. This initiative was not meant to do the Polish Jews a favour, but rather to forcefully “stimulate” them to leave.⁷³

The conclusions of the Polish research commission to Madagascar were inconclusive: whereas Lepecki was very positive and recommended the island as a place for Jewish settlement to his government, the other two members, the Jews Leon Alter and Shlomo Dyk, judged Madagascar unsuitable for Jewish colonisation. The Poles followed only Lepecki’s judgment and took an option on a plot of land of 40,000 hectares.⁷⁴ The French for their part were not really interested, perhaps because they realised that cooperating with the Poles would raise a “very delicate question of the right of a state to take away the national territory of its own subjects”. As the periodical *l’Union Marocaine*, alarmed by the negotiations, stated, the Polish evacuation plans would lead to a “particularly serious situation in our age of extreme xenophobia”.⁷⁵

Nothing came of any colonisation scheme on the island, despite the fact that prominent international figures like British Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore—incidentally involved in the drafting of the Balfour Declaration two decades earlier—had explicitly supported the Freeland version of the plan.⁷⁶ The schemes’ failures were partly due to local opposition on Madagascar.⁷⁷ Poland dropped the plan in order not to antagonise the British,⁷⁸ but this did not rid Madagascar of its blemish of the taint of anti-Semitism.⁷⁹

As Leftwich concluded a few years later, as a result of “Madagascar”, there was now a very ambivalent connection between Territorialist initiatives and anti-Semitism:

Jewish history will always devote some pages to Lublin and the other ghettos
Hitler’s armies have established in Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia and the rest

⁷³ Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 163.

⁷⁴ Jennings, “Writing Madagascar,” 205. For a brief discussion of the objections raised against the Polish Madagascar scheme by Polish Folkist leader Noah Prylucki see Keith Ian Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkists in Poland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 235.

⁷⁵ Original: “question très délicate du droit d’un Etat de débarrasser le territoire national de ses propres sujets” and “situation particulièrement grave à notre époque de xénophobie exacerbée”: Ligue Territorialiste Juive to S. Ginsburg and O. Grün, 29 December 1937, YIVO RG366/31.

⁷⁶ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 142; Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 391-2.

⁷⁷ For an analysis of this local opposition, represented by Governor Léon Cayla, see Jennings, “Writing Madagascar,” mainly 202-3.

⁷⁸ Edna Nahshon and Israel Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays: Three Playscripts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 17-9.

⁷⁹ Leftwich to Lvovitch, 20 January 1937, CZA A330/13.

of the occupied countries – the ugly reverse side of Jewish territorialism, with its Uganda, Cyrenaica, Angola and many other territorial possibilities.⁸⁰

Challenges

As we have seen, the Evian conference was the first official international stage onto which the Freeland League entered. The conference itself has generally been considered a failure. The only tangible result was a small Jewish settlement that was created in the Dominican Republic following the official statement of the country's president that it would allow in 100,000 Jewish refugees. In reality, only a few hundred came.⁸¹ The conference may have merely "symbolized a repudiation of Jewish emancipation, with all parties tacitly approving Jewish political powerlessness", as nobody was willing to criticise Nazi Germany.⁸² Without disagreeing with this generally accepted negative conclusion, Territorialist history does show that the conference offered an international platform for non-Zionist Jewish political organisations. Also, both Evian and the Kristallnacht in November 1938 brought the urgency of finding an emigration solution for the European Jews to the attention of non-Jewish politicians. The Freelanders presented the statements of such figures in support of their own cause.⁸³

Any such support was very much needed, as the young organisation faced several external and internal challenges. Madagascar had aggravated already existing tensions between several Freeland League members.⁸⁴ An outburst between the different Freeland branches occurred when the Austrian group decided to organise a congress in Vienna in 1937. Especially the Polish and French branches were vehemently opposed to this idea, the latter because it was afraid to attract too much attention while the negotiations with

⁸⁰ Memorandum Madagascar, 8 April 1941, YIVO RG366/584; L'Union Marocaine: copy circular no. 93, 30 June 1937, YIVO RG366/46; Leftwich, 'Madagascar', *Jewish Standard* (18 September 1942), CZA A330/14.

⁸¹ Joint-leader James Rosenberg was mainly responsible for the Jewish lobbying on behalf of the establishment of this Sosua settlement: Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 283; 'Gleanings From The Press: The Sosua Story Resurrected', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 15. See also Chapter 4 of this dissertation, as well as Frank Wolff, "Global Walls and Global Movement: New Destinations in Jewish Migration," *East European Jewish Affairs* 44, no. 2-3 (2014): 195-6.

⁸² Joshua Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013), 186.

⁸³ E.g.: "Two Speeches on the Jewish Refugee Problem by the Lord Bishop of Chichester and Captain Victor Cazalet, M.P., 27th and 29th July, 1938," ed. Freeland League (London 1938). Cazalet even explicitly named the Uganda proposal: p. 14.

⁸⁴ See, for example: Kruk to [unknown], [1935], YIVO RG255, Box 1. Some years later, Polish Territorialist Gabriel Haus, at the time residing in London, expressed himself in less than friendly terms about his British colleague Herwald: "a person of no importance and little responsibility. He is not an asset to our cause with hopeless prospects of achieving anything. He presents an easy target to our internal enemies and plays a poor role with the external ones.": Gabriel Haus to Abraham Kin, 6 September 1943, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

the French government were still on-going. Perhaps it was also a matter of principle for the French, who believed that any Freeland League congress should be held in one of the Western European capitals. The initial choice of Vienna, not only supported by Central and Eastern European branches (with the notable exception of the Poles), but also by Nathan Birnbaum and his Dutch following, was not only based on arguments of prestige. Because of the political situation in Germany, the many German Territorialists were only allowed to attend conferences in either Germany or Austria.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the unilateral Austrian initiative was seen as a breach of discipline.⁸⁶

In the end, the Freeland headquarters in London proposed a compromise that the Austrians eventually accepted: the conference would be a Central European affair only.⁸⁷ Still, misunderstandings and even open brawls between the different national divisions of the Freeland League remained part of the organisation's reality, as the different factions could not agree on aims and practicalities. Austrian Territorialist Zoltan Schönberger spoke of "envy and resentment" ("Neid und Missgunst") in the movement and saw a parallel with the situation within the Zionist movement: "Jewry has become very tired."⁸⁸

Besides these internal issues, the Freelanders also had to deal with other setbacks. Money issues had never been a much-discussed topic during the Zangwill-era. The Freeland League, by contrast, continuously grappled with a shortage of funds.⁸⁹ According to Leftwich, "[p]eople were very ready to respond to humanitarian appeals with kind words, but when it came to practical help they always suggested going next door."⁹⁰ Also, political support for the Freeland work did not come without reservations. In 1937, British Labour politician and sympathiser of the Freeland League Arthur Creech Jones already warned Leftwich that he did not think a Jewish colonisation in the British Dominions would ever come about.⁹¹ French colonial minister Marius Moutet repeatedly warned against cherishing exaggerated hopes that large-scale Jewish settlement in the

⁸⁵ Klein and Schönberger to the French Freeland League-branch, 17 February 1937, CZA A330/14.

⁸⁶ Leftwich to Lvovitch, 5 February 1937, CZA A330/13.

⁸⁷ Leftwich to Brutzkus, 1 March 1937, CZA A330/14.

⁸⁸ Original: "Das Judentum [...] ist sehr müde geworden.": Schönberger to Leftwich, 30 November 1937, CZA A330/14. See also Klein to Leftwich [pages are missing], 19 February 1937, CZA A330/14.

⁸⁹ Ligue Territorialiste Juive (French Freeland League) to T.B. Herwald, 9 December 1937, YIVO RG255, Box 1; Report of meeting Freeland League in London (Kessler, Herwald, Steinberg, Nathan), 30 November 1937, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁹⁰ Black book with the minutes of the British department of the Freeland League, 1935-6: remark by Leftwich during meeting 6 January 1936, CZA A330/14.

⁹¹ A. Creech Jones to Leftwich, 11 June 1937, CZA A330/14.

French colonies would materialise.⁹²

These reservations notwithstanding, European Jews were eager to leave Europe: even though the Australian government announced publicly that it would not allow a large influx of Austrian refugees, in Vienna alone 12,000 application forms for emigration to Australia had been handed out by the British Consulate by April 1938.⁹³

Related organisations

Already in 1935, Kruk had concluded that it was necessary to bring more Jews on board of the Territorialist train “as we can build our policy only on the principle of [Jewish] self-help”.⁹⁴ As it turned out, there were willing wealthy Jewish benefactors, such as the Jewish-Swedish banker Olof Aschberg, who agreed with the French Freeland-branch to participate in the founding of a bank for Territorial Colonisation.⁹⁵ Steinberg mentioned this fact to the Dutch-Jewish businessman Daniel Wolf, who donated 500 British pounds the following month—half of what Steinberg had requested—for Steinberg’s mission to Australia.⁹⁶

Shortly before, Wolf had founded his own Jewish colonisation organisation JewCol (also known as the International Refugee Colonisation Society: IRCS) in The Hague. JewCol resembled the Freeland League in its assessment of the clear limitations of Palestine as a solution to the Jewish problem. Also reminiscent of the Territorialists, JewCol sought an “all-embracing solution” through extensive colonisation elsewhere, with a certain degree of autonomy, but potentially within a federative structure. The Dutch organisation made a promising start, as Wolf secured 2 million dollars from his contacts within the first few weeks of its existence. JewCol then not only contributed to Steinberg’s travels to Australia, but it also sent out its own research expedition to Dutch Guiana in 1940.⁹⁷ The founding signatories of JewCol explicitly acknowledged the importance of attracting influential Jewish financiers, as money and prestige were crucial to the movement’s success.⁹⁸ One of Wolf’s closest associates was Henri van Leeuwen, who, as

⁹² *JTA Bulletin* (27 January 1937), CZA A330/86.

⁹³ *JTA Bulletin* (1 April 1938), CZA A330/86.

⁹⁴ Kruk to Kessler, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁹⁵ Telegram Olof Aschberg to Leopold Kessler, 22 November 1938, YIVO RG366/495; Steinberg to Daniel Wolf, 23 November 1938, YIVO RG366/479.

⁹⁶ Steinberg to Wolf, 16 December 1938 and 23 April 1939, YIVO RG366/479.

⁹⁷ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 197-9.

⁹⁸ ‘Initiative for Jewish Colonisation’ (transcript of founding text JewCol), [1938], YIVO RG255, Box 1. The signatories to this text were all prominent Dutch Jews: A. Asscher (A’dam), E. Belinfante, H.B. van Leeuwen, E. Moresco, D. Wolf and S. van Zwanenberg (The Hague).

we will see, was also connected to the Freeland League as a member of Nathan Birnbaum's JPS. After the war, Van Leeuwen, by then a Freeland League-member himself, was to play a crucial role in the Territorialists' endeavours in Surinam.⁹⁹

As the example of JewCol indicates, the New Territorialists were not alone on the stage when it came to finding emigration outlets for Jews. Diaspora Nationalists, for instance, were also involved in different Jewish emigration projects. Elias Tcherikower and Yisroel Efroikin, who later cooperated with Territorialists Ben-Adir and Abraham Kin, were active in Emigdirekt, an immigrant aid organisation that propagated a collective Jewish approach to emigration. Emigdirekt, headquartered in Berlin, joined HIAS and the Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA) in 1927 to form HICEM, but left the cooperation in 1934.¹⁰⁰

The Freeland League was more inclined than the ITO had been to cooperate with these other Jewish organisations concerned with immigration.¹⁰¹ The Territorialists teamed up with both JewCol and the Paris-based Emcol to create Jewish settlements in the French colonies.¹⁰² The French Freeland League and Emcol even had a joint Executive Committee.¹⁰³ Emcol was set up as a funds-gathering body and aimed to stimulate governments to grant territories for Jewish settlement. This way, the organisation argued, the pressure on Palestine would be relieved, so that it could develop at a normal pace.¹⁰⁴

The potential support of Joseph Rosen's American Joint Distribution Committee has already been mentioned. Rosen, who headed the so-called Agro-joint during the 1920s, remained involved with Territorialism during subsequent years.¹⁰⁵ Another organisation treading on similar terrain was Anthony de Rothschild's Central Emigration Committee. This "Rothschild Group", like the Freeland League, explored British Guiana as a potential outlet for Jewish emigrants, albeit not necessarily aiming at concentrated

⁹⁹ A.o. a talk between the author and Kato Pomer-Van Leeuwen and Karen Pomer, daughter and granddaughter of Henri van Leeuwen, on 6 November 2013, Los Angeles.

¹⁰⁰ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 178-179; Cecile Esther Kuznitz, *Yivo and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 53. Miscellaneous correspondence between Efroikin and Kin, YIVO RG554, Box 4; document with history *Yiddish Encyclopedia*, YIVO RG554, Box 3.

¹⁰¹ Amongst others: Schönberger to Leftwich, 17 January 1938, CZA A330/14.

¹⁰² Klein to Leftwich, 14 June 1937, CZA A330/14.

¹⁰³ Freeland League ("Terre Libre") pamphlet, attached to: R. Feinleib to prof. J. Hadamard (New York), 20 February 1943, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

¹⁰⁴ Emcol-document: 'Initiative for Jewish Colonisation', [1938], YIVO RG255, Box 2.

¹⁰⁵ George L. Warren (secretary to the U.S. President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees) to Joseph Rosen, 4 January 1939 and 19 January 1939, YIVO RG554, Box 1. Some of Rosen's correspondence on Jewish colonisation issues, not necessarily connected to the Freeland work, can be found in the Abraham Kin Papers: YIVO RG554, Box 1.

settlements. An important common contact of both organisations was the Anglo-Jewish industrialist Robert Waley Cohen, who urged Steinberg to team up with Rothschild's circle. However, Steinberg was more interested in establishing such cooperation with Nathan Birnbaum's religiously inspired Jewish People's Service, to which we will turn below. Steinberg assessed that the Freelanders could function independently and did not need the external (financial) support from the Rothschilds. In fact, he argued, the activities of the Rothschild group only hindered the Freeland activities in the U.K. Nonetheless, Steinberg reluctantly contacted the Rothschild Group in early 1939.¹⁰⁶

Lastly, from 1940 until the mid 1950s, Steinberg was in touch with Eugenio Villa, the founder of a movement called New Judea. In 1939, Villa had written a pamphlet in which he had proposed the creation of a Jewish autonomous region in South Rhodesia.¹⁰⁷ Around the same time, in 1938, the Austrian-born, enigmatic figure Joseph Otmar Hefter wrote his *Room for the Jew! A demand for a free and sovereign Jewish State*, the founding text of his Nai Juda movement. Steinberg authored a review of this pamphlet and subsequently contacted Hefter. In 1939, Hefter, who had an office in New York City, before moving to Los Angeles during the 1940s, wrote to Steinberg, attaching documentation about his so-called Peace River Project. This project was aimed at settling an initial 50,000 Jews in British Columbia, Canada, within two years' time. The correspondence between Hefter and Steinberg lasted until after the war,¹⁰⁸ but never materialised into concrete cooperation.

Movements like Villa's and Hefter's appear to have been mainly one-man initiatives. Nonetheless, the existence of different forms of organised Territorialism,

¹⁰⁶ Steinberg to Seligman, 30 November 1938, YIVO RG366/468; Steinberg to Nathan, 10 January 1939, YIVO RG366/451; Steinberg to Van Leeuwen, 16 December 1938, YIVO RG366/493; Anthony de Rothschild (Chairman of the Emigration Sub-committee [of Rothschild's Central Emigration Committee?]) to George L. Warren, 20 December 1938, YIVO RG554, Box 1; Steinberg to Henri van Leeuwen, 4 January 1939, YIVO RG366/493; Steinberg to Myer S. Nathan, 10 January 1939, YIVO RG366/451; George L. Warren to Joseph Rosen, 19 January 1939, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

¹⁰⁷ Resume meeting between Eugenio Villa and Nahum Goldmann, 7 March 1940; 'The radical Zionism', [1939]; Pro Memoria for Josef Székely, [1940]; Villa to Steinberg, 15 May 1940; Steinberg to Villa, 23 September 1940; Villa to Steinberg, 31 January 1955, all in YIVO RG366/359.

¹⁰⁸ Steinberg to Joseph O. Hefter, 29 July 1938, YIVO RG366/420; Hefter to Steinberg, 25 October 1939, YIVO RG366/497; Hefter to Steinberg, 27 October 1945; Hefter, 'Jewish Independence Manifesto. A demand for restauration of the Jews as an independent Jewish nation in a sovereign Jewish state' (1945), YIVO RG366/266; letter Joseph Hefter in 'Letters', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 13; in 2012, Israeli artist Udi Edelman tried to reconstruct the life of the acclaimed illustrator Hefter, a professional con artist, who fabricated most details of his past, while making his way from Austria to the U.S. and finally Mexico. The Nai Juda movement really did exist, complete with professional looking propaganda material and even its own Yiddish theme song. Edelman documented his findings in a 42-minute film for the Israeli Center for Digital Art: <http://www.blumology.net/hefter.html> (retrieved 22 August 2015).

however small these initiatives may have been, shows that Territorialist ideas were more widespread than is generally acknowledged, and that the manifestations of such ideas came in various shapes and sizes. Leftwich, although realising that it was somewhat utopian, even saw the Freeland League as “the ideal ‘Dach-Organisation’ [“roof” or umbrella organisation], in which the Zionist Organisation, or part of it, so far as the extra-Palestine work is concerned, the Agudah [Agudat Israel], the [American Jewish] Joint [Distribution Committee], the Ica and I imagine the ORT [*Obshestvo Remeslenofo zemledelcheskofo Truda*, or The Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour] and others could cooperate.”¹⁰⁹

Main actors: Joseph Leftwich (1892-1983) ¹¹⁰

Leftwich was one of the central figures in the revival of Territorialism in these early years. He is mainly known for his English translations of Yiddish literature, as well as for his unauthorised biography of Israel Zangwill.¹¹¹ Leftwich was born as Joseph Lefkowitz in Zutphen, the Netherlands, as the only surviving son of a Polish cobbler, who moved to the United Kingdom when Joseph was five years old. Largely a literary autodidact who ended his formal education at the age of fourteen, Leftwich was one of the ‘Whitechapel Boys’. This was a group of aspiring young Jewish writers in London’s East End, active during the years before the First World War. One of the other members of this group was Isaac Rosenberg, the promising poet who perished in the Great War.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Leftwich to Lvovitch, 9 February 1937, CZA A330/13.

¹¹⁰ Unless mentioned otherwise, the information below is based on: Maurice Samuelson, “Joseph Leftwich Dead at 90,” *JTA Jewish News Archive* (7-3-1983), available at <http://archive.jta.org/article/1983/03/07/2995708/joseph-leftwich-dead-at-90> (retrieved 29 May 2012).

¹¹¹ Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1957); Publisher James Clarke & Co to Leftwich, 29 January 1957, CZA A330/841. Another, somewhat curious publication is a polemic dialogue between Leftwich and the (in)famous right-wing British politician Arthur Kenneth Chesterton: A. K. Chesterton and Joseph Leftwich, *The Tragedy of Anti-Semitism* (London: R. Anscombe, 1948). That there was no true animosity between the two shows from the fact that Chesterton wrote a warm birthday wish in a small compilation publication on the occasion of Leftwich’s 75th birthday in 1967: *Joseph Leftwich: Messages and Tributes Received on the Occasion of His Seventy Fifth Birthday, September 20, 1967* (London: Jewish Cultural Society, 1967). As a permanent delegate of the Yiddish PEN Club centre and a member of the executive of PEN, the world organisation of writers, Leftwich protested against the persecutions of Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union. During the Second World War he had already acted as secretary to the Jewish Fund for Soviet Russia, part of Winston Churchill’s Red Cross Aid to Russia Fund. Well into old age, he was the director of the Federation of Jewish Relief Organizations, while also serving on the executive of the British ORT and the British OSE (*Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants*): Joseph Leftwich, ‘J.V. Podolsky’, *Freeland* XVI, no. 1 (51) (April 1963): 5-6, 12: 5.

¹¹² One of Leftwich’s poems was later ascribed to Rosenberg: Zangwill to Leftwich, 26 July 1922, CZA A330/44. I am also indebted to Joseph McElroy for sharing with me his recollections of his ex-father-in-law during several private conversations in New York City in the fall of 2014.

In 1920, Leftwich became an editor for the London Bureau of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA).¹¹³ As already mentioned, that very same year he asked Zangwill to speak at a conference of a newly founded anti-Palestine action group.¹¹⁴ Leftwich' active involvement in the resuscitation of the Territorialist organisation therefore came as no surprise. Already in 1934, Leftwich was in touch with the newly organised Polish Territorialists.¹¹⁵ In 1936, he published *What will happen to the Jews?*, which helped to refuel Territorialist ambitions and ideas. In 1937, Zoltan Schönberger, the leader of the Austrian branch of the Freeland League, even wrote to Leftwich: "Through your book you have in fact become the father of this new movement."¹¹⁶

Leftwich withdrew from the movement during the war years because he became occupied with several other Jewish causes.¹¹⁷ Most importantly, he did not feel comfortable with the direction the Freeland League was taking under the influence and leadership of Isaac Steinberg. Leftwich felt that the socialist-revolutionary ideals that now underlay the Freeland movement were not in line with the non-party approach that Zangwill had proposed. Moreover, he was not charmed by places like Madagascar and Australia and preferred to devote his attention to individual migration to areas that seemed more feasible to him.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, even during the post-war years, Leftwich would still occasionally publish on Freeland affairs.¹¹⁹ In a 1963 issue of the Freeland League's periodical *Freeland*, for which he was now officially a contributing editor, Leftwich was merely introduced as "a prominent Anglo-Jewish writer who lives in London"; his Territorialist past was ignored. Leftwich himself contributed to this silencing: in an article written as a tribute to the recently deceased Territorialist J.V. Podolsky, he only referred to himself as having been the secretary of the first Freeland League group in London.¹²⁰

¹¹³ Zangwill to Joseph Leftwich, 18 July 1922, CZA A330/44.

¹¹⁴ Leftwich to Zangwill, 17 April 1920, CZA A120/431, p. 10.

¹¹⁵ Zalman Majzner to T.B. Herwald, 24 November 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹¹⁶ Original: "Sie sind durch Ihr Buch eigentlich der Vater dieser neuen Bewegung geworden.": Zoltan Schönberger to Leftwich, 11 November 1937, CZA A330/14. See also Leftwich, *What Will Happen to the Jews?*; Leftwich to Herwald, 5 June 1936, YIVO RG255, Box 2;

¹¹⁷ Leftwich to Herwald, 20 January 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

¹¹⁸ Joseph Leftwich, 'Yitskhok –Nakhmen Steinberg', *Freeland* 11, no. 1 (Jan.-March 1958): 3-4: 3.

¹¹⁹ See for instance the 'Letter to the Editor' in an unknown book publication, written after the establishment of the State of Israel, in which Leftwich revisits the Territorial options in Australia: YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹²⁰ Joseph Leftwich, 'J.V. Podolsky', *Freeland* XVI, no. 1 (51) (April 1963): 5-6, 12. In 1953, *Freeland* already merely referred to Leftwich as an "Anglo-Jewish writer": 'In The Press', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 17. Leftwich was still a contributing editor in 1972: *Freeland* 24, no. 1 (65) (Spring 1972).

*Main actors: Isaac N. Steinberg (1888–1957)*¹²¹

Leftwich had been a Freeland-pioneer, but it was another central figure who determined the movement's ideological direction: the Russian former Leninist émigré Isaac N. Steinberg. He was, in his friend William Zuckerman's words, of the dying-out "generation of Russian-Jewish intellectuals, born, as it were, on the fringe of the pre-Communist Russian Revolution, which absorbed some of the greatness, vision, spirit of rebellion, and yearning for freedom and justice which were in the very air of that period."¹²² After his death, Territorialist Lesser Fruchtbaum described Steinberg's impressive physical appearance:

His large build, with long bushy hair and penetrating blue eyes, were at once singled out in any gathering. His was a magnetic charm that attracted whoever came into contact with him. People, naturally listened to him, were they friend or enemy. He had the faculty of conveying ideas and of infecting others with his own inexhaustible enthusiasm.¹²³

During an early exile as a student, Steinberg received his law degree at the University of Heidelberg.¹²⁴ Back in Russia, while briefly serving as Commissar of Justice under Lenin, Steinberg was one of the signatories to the independence of Finland in 1917.¹²⁵ Like several other Russian and Ukrainian Jews of his generation, he then suffered from the "abysmal disillusionment" of the revolution,¹²⁶ and with his family fled to Berlin, where he stayed between 1923 and 1933.¹²⁷ During his period in Germany, Steinberg edited the

¹²¹ Steinberg's diverse life and career, as well as his large corpus of publications warrant a comprehensive biography. For an analysis of Steinberg's revolutionary thought, based on a close reading of part of his work and on other secondary sources (but not on archival material), see Hendrik Wallat, *Oktoberrevolution oder Bolschewismus: Studien zu Leben und Werk von Isaak N. Steinberg* (Münster: Edition Assemblage, 2013). Wallat mentions Steinberg's later Jewish political work only in passing: Wallat, *Oktoberrevolution*, 23-9. For a biographical overview of Steinberg's life and work see Willy Birkenmaier, "Judentum Ohne Rückkehr Nach Palästina: Isaak Steinberg und der Territorialismus als Alternative zum Zionismus," *Trumah*, no. 19 (2010). Also: Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 60-5. I am indebted to Shefa Siegel, great-grandson of Isaac Steinberg and grandson of Ada Siegel, for our many conversations and e-mails over the years through which I learnt much about the Steinberg family.

¹²² W. Zuckerman, 'Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5-6: 5.

¹²³ Draft speech Fruchtbaum, 'Evaluation of Dr. I.N. Steinberg', [1957], YIVO RG682/327.

¹²⁴ 'Reports From The Press: Jewish Chronicle (London, Jan. 3, 1957)', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 11.

¹²⁵ This fact is mentioned in: 'New Jerusalem in Australia', *Smith Weekly* (10 February 1940), YIVO RG554, Box 1.

¹²⁶ W. Zuckerman, 'Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5-6: 5; Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 26.

¹²⁷ A. Bialistoker, 'Ada Steinberg-Siegel', *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 6-7.

periodical *Freie Schriften*, which mainly dealt with international socialism and Jewish national thought.¹²⁸ Moreover, the Steinberg-home was frequented by many illustrious Jewish political figures such as Simon Dubnow, the economist Jacob Lestschinsky, Simon Rawidowicz, and Elias Tcherikower. Steinberg's brother Aaron was the first to translate Dubnow's history of the Jewish people into German.¹²⁹ Through these many connections, Steinberg thus represents an important link between Territorialism and other, better-known forms of non-Zionist Jewish political behaviour.

Mikhail Krutikov traces Steinberg's later Jewish politics back to the ideological principles underlying the Russian Populism (*narodnichestvo*) centred on peasant life that had shaped his thinking. Indeed, as we will see, Steinberg, like other Territorialists, was preoccupied with agriculture as one of the most important ingredients of the aspired-for Territorialist settlement. Krutikov moreover convincingly argues that Steinberg's anti-statism was not only based on his anarchist ideas, but also on his general disappointment in the failed state building process he had been briefly involved with in 1917. During the 1920s, his radical universalism and utopian messianism remained. The only thing that changed in Steinberg's visions was the shift from the Russian people to the Jews.¹³⁰ In this vein, the Kimberley scheme may have indeed been a way for Steinberg to redeem his failed Soviet revolutionary ideals.¹³¹ "[A]ll nations' possess States", he would write in 1948, "But have men become happier as a result? Has not the energy of nations exhausted itself in the upbuilding of the State at the expense of the other social phenomena: the family, daily human intercourse, educational standards, social morality?"¹³²

Like Leftwich, Steinberg became involved with Freeland League affairs shortly after the movement's foundation¹³³ by invitation of Majzner, who visited Steinberg in his new home in London.¹³⁴ Initially, Steinberg had not been willing to officially join the movement—in 1929, he had also turned down an invitation to join the Jewish

¹²⁸ Shmuel Niger, 'The Word Or The Deed', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 5.

¹²⁹ A. Bialistoker, 'Ada Steinberg-Siegel', *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 6-7; Birkenmaier, "Judentum Ohne Rückkehr," 93.

¹³⁰ Mikhail Krutikov, "Isaac Nahman Steinberg: From Anti-Communist Revolutionary to Anti-Zionist Territorialist," *Jews in Eastern Europe*, no. Spring-Fall (1999): 13, 17, 21.

¹³¹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 157.

¹³² Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 115.

¹³³ Josef Kruk to Myer Nathan, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1; Zalman Majzner to the Freeland Liga Polish central bureau in Warsaw, 13 September 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 156.

¹³⁴ M. Mendelsberg, obituary for Nechama Esselson-Steinberg [Isaac Steinberg's wife], *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 6-7; A. Bialistoker, 'Ada Steinberg-Siegel', *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 6-7.

Agency¹³⁵—and first wanted to explore certain immigration options by himself. Eventually, he joined the Freeland League in the mid-1930s and was elected to its propaganda committee at the movement's first meeting in London in 1935.¹³⁶ The influential Polish Territorialists held Steinberg in exceptionally high esteem¹³⁷ and his qualities as a political negotiator were acknowledged by other Territorialists as well.¹³⁸ Not long thereafter, Steinberg was to use these skills during his propaganda tour to Australia.

After the Australia adventure, Steinberg planned to relocate to the United States. Despite a letter of recommendation from Zionist leader Rabbi Stephen Wise, obtaining a visa proved complicated. He eventually succeeded, mostly because of the efforts of his daughter Ada (1917-1956). She had been lobbying her father's case with several officials, most notably Eleanor Roosevelt, who intervened on Steinberg's behalf.¹³⁹ Shortly before, Ada had married a Canadian officer, David Siegel, and moved to Toronto from London. Already before her marriage, while still in London, she had become one of the most active Freeland members, together with her father largely defining the direction of the movement. As we will see in the following chapter, Ada's role as a Territorialist would become even more important after the move of the Freeland League headquarters to New York City.

Curiously, Steinberg and Leftwich, although they knew each other and met on numerous occasions,¹⁴⁰ hardly engaged in any direct correspondence. In 1938, even though he had been affiliated with Freeland already for some years,¹⁴¹ Steinberg declared not to be in touch with Leftwich at all.¹⁴² In 1957, Leftwich shed some light on the complicated relationship the two men had experienced: they had shared many values and ideas, both religious and moral, and had worked for the same organisations. As colleagues at YIVO, they visited Sigmund Freud together in London. Both had anarchist, libertarian,

¹³⁵ Wallat, *Oktoberrevolution*, 23.

¹³⁶ Joseph Leftwich, 'Yitskhok –Nakhmen Steinberg', *Freeland* 11, no. 1 (Jan.-March 1958): 3-4; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 157.

¹³⁷ Michael Astour, 'Ten Years Ago. A Memorial Reminiscence Of Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 20, no. 1 (Jan. 1967): 5-8: 5-6.

¹³⁸ French Freeland League to L. Kessler and T.B. Herwald, 9 December 1937, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹³⁹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 178-9.

¹⁴⁰ Joseph Leftwich, 'Yitskhok –Nakhmen Steinberg', *Freeland* 11, no. 1 (Jan.-March 1958): 3-4: 3; Invitation to Freeland League meeting 1 February 1937, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁴¹ Steinberg to Mrs. Warr, 16 March 1938, YIVO RG366/479; Steinberg to Charles Seligman (Freeland League member), [1951], YIVO RG682/826; Zalman Majzner to the Freeland Liga Polish central bureau in Warsaw, 13 September 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁴² Steinberg to Max Apt, 18 September 1938, YIVO RG366/391.

socialist leanings and in that capacity wrote for the New York-based *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*. Nevertheless, their political outlooks were too different for them to work together. Leftwich left the movement and passed on its leadership to Steinberg. "People reach similar conclusions by different roads", Leftwich wrote. "We met somewhere on the road, and in some way, not shoulder to shoulder, but at no great distance in the same ranks, we marched for a time together."¹⁴³

Politics and Culture

These years between the two world wars represented the high tide for Jewish politics in Europe. Therefore, in this chapter, we begin our thematic analysis of the Freeland League by having a closer look at its relationship to political and political-cultural developments.

Diaspora Nationalism

During the interwar period, territorial ambitions were part of the platforms of several other non-Zionist political groups in Central and Eastern Europe as well. These attachments to territoriality show not only the diffuse nature of Jewish politics during this period, but also demonstrate that there were parallel but unconnected Territorialist efforts undertaken in different parts of Europe.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, not only did Diaspora Nationalism cherish Territorialist ambitions, but, vice versa, Territorialism could also be seen as part of the larger Diaspora Nationalist project. It is therefore insightful to take a closer look at the relationship between Territorialism and Diaspora Nationalism, both as separate, but interrelated movements, and as mutually encompassing umbrella concepts.

Diaspora Nationalists, like the Territorialists, optimistically relied on the possibility of a synthesis between politics and culture. Both movements overestimated the broader Jewish investment in their cause. Efröikin was criticised for pointing out the apathy of most Jews towards Palestine, while failing to acknowledge that a similar disinterest existed towards Yiddishism.¹⁴⁵ This accusation could be made towards the Territorialists as well, who assumed that the masses would follow as soon as a location would be secured.

¹⁴³ Joseph Leftwich, 'Yitskhok –Nakhmen Steinberg', *Freeland* 11, no. 1 (Jan.-March 1958): 3-4.

¹⁴⁴ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 31, 56, 63, 65, 66; Jonathan Frankel, "Modern Jewish Politics East and West (1840-1939). Utopia, Myth, Reality," in *The Quest for Utopia. Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions through the Ages*, ed. Zvi Gitelman (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 91.

¹⁴⁵ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 177. Kalman Weiser writes that for most Polish Jews during this period "Yiddish was [...] a fact of life but not an ideology": Weiser, *Jewish People*, 224.

There was, however, one crucial difference between Territorialism and Diaspora Nationalism that cannot be overlooked: Diaspora Nationalists essentially believed in non-territorial Jewish autonomy.¹⁴⁶ As Zhitlowsky's ideas became more dominant than Dubnow's, Yiddish and Yiddishism, rather than Dubnow's more abstract form of Jewish unity, were to replace both religion and territory. This version of autonomy was to be just as much an intellectual as a people's project, and the Diaspora Nationalist "flagship institution", the YIVO in Wilna, would act as a new Jewish government.¹⁴⁷ Rovner's assertion that the Territorialists aimed at an "ingathering" of Jews puts the point in too heavily laden terms,¹⁴⁸ but they were indeed uniformly decided on the territorial nature of their proposed solution. It was the territory that would guarantee the preservation of Jewish culture, without forcing cultural actors into "essentialism" as a reaction to a hostile environment.¹⁴⁹

This difference did not rule out practical overlaps between the two approaches. For instance, Polish Folkist leader Noah Prylucki explored immigration options for European Jews to the United States, while at the same time labouring on behalf of Jewish life in the European Diaspora.¹⁵⁰ Author Stefan Zweig, a supporter of Territorialism and a contributor to its publications, simultaneously contributed to the Diaspora Nationalist periodical *Oyfn Sheydveg* (At the Crossroads) during the late 1930s.¹⁵¹ Sometimes individuals even crossed over between the movements. Most of these people belonged to Zhitlowsky's political and secular wing within Diaspora Nationalism. Zhitlowsky focused on the Yiddish language as a binding factor, as opposed to Simon Dubnow's federation of nationalities, which was based on the older Jewish *Kehille* system.¹⁵² Zhitlowsky's rejection of Dubnow's particularistic approach was undoubtedly better suited for Territorialism; after all, the Freelanders sought a solution that was dependent on the goodwill of (colonial) countries to receive large groups of Jews and therefore needed to

¹⁴⁶ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 143, 147. Dubnow did acknowledge that Jews were in essence territorial, but he did not believe in concentrated settlement: Simon Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 33.

¹⁴⁷ Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 12, 58.

¹⁴⁸ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 9.

¹⁴⁹ This was the viewpoint of Yiddishist Territorialist Zeev-Volf Latski-Bertoldi: Kenneth B. Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 295-6.

¹⁵⁰ Weiser, *Jewish People*, 198.

¹⁵¹ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 182.

¹⁵² David E. Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 62-3, 67-8, 75, 101.

show themselves flexible and adaptable.¹⁵³ Despite the difference in religious outlook, there were many similarities between Zhitlowsky and Steinberg, not only in terms of their Jewish ideologies, but both had also belonged to the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary party.¹⁵⁴ Already in 1904, Zhitlowsky openly proclaimed his newfound attachment to the idea of a separate territory as crucial for the Jewish future.¹⁵⁵ This conviction undoubtedly led to his membership of the Freeland League in the mid-1930s.

It was this non-dogmatic flexibility of Territorialism that made it interesting to disillusioned Diaspora Nationalists. Territorialism's appeal also lay in the fact that it offered a middle way between the two dominant strands in Jewish political thinking: Bundism and Zionism. Bundism, for a while striving towards a post-national internationalism, for many was not based enough in Jewish culture and tradition, while Zionism did not allow for the perpetuation of Jewish life in the Diaspora. Simon Rabinovitch' assertion that Diaspora Nationalism eventually transformed into an affiliation with and support for Zionism therefore tells only part of the story.¹⁵⁶ As the hopes for a purely Diaspora Nationalist solution died during the 1930s, Territorialism offered a welcome alternative as well: a territorial solution outside Europe, with Yiddish language and culture rather than territory at its ideological centre.¹⁵⁷

Several Diaspora Nationalists eventually joined the Territorialist movement. Journalist William Zuckerman observed this especially among the Folkists in Poland.¹⁵⁸ Territorialist J.V. Podolsky became active within the movement after the Second World

¹⁵³ Territorialists themselves indeed perceived Zhitlowsky's work as close to their own activities. As late as 1963, the Freeland League organised a symposium to commemorate the 20th "johrzayt" of the Diaspora Nationalist's death: Pamphlet [in Yiddish] for Frayland symposium 16 March 1963, YIVO RG682/327. Also, in 1925, the Winnipeg-based J.A. Cherniack, who would join the Freeland League Advisory Committee in 1943, was on the 'Dr. Ch. Zhitlowsky Jubileum Committee' to celebrate Zhitlowsky's 60th birthday. Despite the differences between Zhitlowsky and Dubnow, the European branch of this committee was headed by the latter: letter 'Dr. Ch. Zhitlowsky Jubileum Committee' to various recipients, 26 December 1925, YIVO RG264, Box 1; Jacob Levin and M. Mendelsberg for the Freeland League to J.A. Cherniack, 6 February 1943, YIVO RG264, Box 1. As late as 1942, Cherniack corresponded with Zhitlowsky, although not about Territorialist matters: YIVO RG264, Box 1.

¹⁵⁴ Joseph Leftwich, 'Yitskhok -Nakhmen Steinberg', *Freeland* 11, no. 1 (Jan.-March 1958): 3-4. Also: Krutikov, "Isaac Nahman Steinberg," 17. Frankel's typification of Zhitlowsky as an "ideological nomad", moving from one political faction another, could be applied to Steinberg as well: Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 258.

¹⁵⁵ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 275.

¹⁵⁶ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, a.o.: foreword, xxxii.

¹⁵⁷ 'The Miracles Of Jewish Reality', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 3-4: 3.

¹⁵⁸ William Zu[c]kerman, 'Territories', draft article attached to letter to Steinberg, [1938], YIVO RG366/479. In 1934, Zuckerman wrote that he believed that Jews were returning to Palestine "not because of any idealism [...] [but] because that is the only country where they can have a fascism of their own." Quoted in Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 281.

War, but had started his Jewish political life as a Bundist.¹⁵⁹ Even though he did not join the Territorialist movement as such, Diaspora Nationalist Yisroel Efrogkin ventured away from Dubnowian thought towards Territorialism. He increasingly believed in the necessity of a territorial premise for the achievement of a Jewish national renaissance.¹⁶⁰

Zelig Kalmanovitch did leave Diaspora Nationalism for Territorialism. After Hitler's rise to power, he joined the Freeland League and spoke at several Freeland gatherings. Due to his disillusionment with the prospects for Jewish life in the existing Diaspora settings, Kalmanovitch now believed that only within a Territorialist framework Jews would be safe from cultural and linguistic acculturation. "In exile," he claimed in 1940, "Jews can have no human rights".¹⁶¹ After the Shoah, Kalmanovitch wrote a biting critique of the ideas of famous author I.L. Peretz, who had been a central figure in Yiddishist activities. Peretz had believed in a holistic approach to formulating and understanding Jewishness. He had opposed the idea that Jews should be seen as just an ethnic minority like all others: "'A people and nothing more"— here is where the danger begins!"¹⁶² Nonetheless, Kalmanovitch dismissed the famed writer for claiming that a cultural and spiritual Jewish culture would form the basis for Jewish national cohesion. In 1950, while writing these words, Kalmanovitch more than ever believed that in addition to this a physical concentration of Jews was also necessary to safeguard their future existence.¹⁶³

As a final example, Ben-Adir, one of the main figures of this second wave of Territorialism, had personal and professional ties with various other political and Yiddishist movements and individuals.¹⁶⁴ Ben Adir's career exemplifies the multi-coloured reality of a politically active Jewish life during the period under consideration. Born in Krutchka, in the Russian Empire in 1877, he studied social sciences in Paris before returning to Russia in 1905. There he edited numerous Russian and Yiddish periodicals, most famously the Jewish socialist autonomist *Vozrozhdenie* (Rebirth), which he founded in Kiev in 1903. In 1922, Ben-Adir moved to Berlin, after which he spent the years 1925-1928 in Palestine, working for *Davar* and the American *The Future*. In 1933, he arrived in Paris, where, together with Abraham Menes, Aaron Steinberg (Isaac Steinberg's brother!), Elias Tcherikower, H. Abramovitch and Abraham Kin, he founded the *Yiddish Encyclopedia*

¹⁵⁹ Joseph Leftwich, 'J.V. Podolsky', *Freeland* XVI, no. 1 (51) (April 1963): 5-6, 12.

¹⁶⁰ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 305.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 182, 230, 197.

¹⁶² Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 71.

¹⁶³ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 277.

¹⁶⁴ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 260.

in 1935.¹⁶⁵ A year before his death in 1942, Ben-Adir established the Yiddish Territorialist periodical *Oifn Shvel* (On the Threshold), which was continued under the leadership of Steinberg from 1944 onwards and still exists today.¹⁶⁶

Socialism, Communism and Labour

Jewish politics were not isolated from the broader political world. Many of the Diaspora Nationalist and Yiddishist factions and individuals had socialist underpinnings. A similar connection exists between Territorialism and socialism. Zangwill had written an Ibsenian play with Karl Marx' daughter Eleanor Marx,¹⁶⁷ and in 1919 he was accused of having Bolshevik sympathies, as he had openly supported the Russian Revolution. Around the same time, the young Leftwich was a socialist, and he kept his connections to socialist-anarchist circles later on, as a member of the London branch of the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*.¹⁶⁸ Lastly, as already mentioned, parallel to the ITO's foundation, Nachman Syrkin formed his Socialist-Territorialist party.

The marriage between socialism and Territorialism during the second wave of Territorialism was partly a consequence of the political trends of the time in which socialist views were gaining widespread support. It was also the result of the national and political backgrounds of the New Territorialists, who increasingly stemmed from Central and Eastern Europe. As described above, the 1930s initially saw several, uncoordinated Territorialist initiatives spring up in different parts of Europe. The particular political circumstances of these separate factions largely determined their ideological inclinations, and would eventually pose difficulties for the definition of one Territorialist political and ideological agenda. Resonating the SS's Socialist Territorialism, the Polish Freelanders ended their early letters: "Mit sozialistische-territorialistische Gruss" ("with Socialist-Territorialist regards").¹⁶⁹ In the U.K., the openly pro-Soviet Labour politician D.N. Pritt

¹⁶⁵ Document written by Ben-Adir with autobiographical information; document with history *Yiddish Encyclopedia*, YIVO RG554, Box 3; Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, xxviii, 140; Simon Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 61-2; Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 279.

¹⁶⁶ 'The Freeland League in Action', *Freeland* (August 1944): 8-9:9.

¹⁶⁷ Nahshon and Zangwill, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 17-19.

¹⁶⁸ Samuel Joseph Goldsmith, *Joseph Leftwich at Eighty-Five: A Collective Evaluation* (London: Federation of Jewish Relief Organisations, Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists, World Jewish Congress Yiddish Committee, 1978), 10; Joseph Leftwich, 'J.V. Podolsky', *Freeland* XVI, no. 1 (51) (April 1963): 5-6, 12; Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena: The Career of Israel Zangwill* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), xxv.

¹⁶⁹ Bezalel Gelender to M. Mendelsberg, August 1934, YIVO RG366/12.

appeared on the speakers' list for the Preparatory International Conference of the Freeland League, held in July 1935.¹⁷⁰

Polish Territorialist Gabriel Haus analysed the Anglo-Jewish position towards Territorialism not just in socialist-, but in explicitly Marxist-inspired terms: according to him, only the "Jewish wealthy classes" opposed it.¹⁷¹ In a similar vein, Ben-Adir's Territorialist writings mentioned a national future for a "Jewish proletariat".¹⁷² According to him, capitalism had created a very harmful form of nationalism, which socialism attempted to fix by introducing new forms of national autonomy. The Austro-Marxist approach of Otto Bauer and Karl Renner had been admirable, but eventually flawed as well. The only really workable solution was a coming together of nation and territory, not in a capitalist-nationalist way, but based on socialist principles, "broad national perspectives", with smaller units together making up an internationalist whole:

It is time to free ourselves from the fatalism associated with the bourgeois approach to the problem of minorities. [...] [T]here will be no Babel of nations or melting pots of national fragments; there will be compact national units living as healthy, normal, natural members of the human family. [...] It is evident that the search for a practical solution to the Jewish problem leads ultimately to territorialism.¹⁷³

In the United Kingdom, support for the Freeland League came from different corners of the political spectrum. On 23 July 1935, several British members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords organised a lunch for the foreign delegates to the first Freeland conference in London, showing the involvement in the Territorialist movement of British politicians of all political colours.¹⁷⁴ "We have now practically the support of Liberal, Labour and Conservatives", Kruk wrote to Kessler one month after the conference.¹⁷⁵ Like Zangwill had done before him, Leftwich tried to maintain this broad

¹⁷⁰ Leaflet of the League for Jewish Colonisation, London, 17 July 1935, YIVO RG366/30.

¹⁷¹ Gabriel Haus to Abraham Kin, 9 October 1940, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

¹⁷² Ben-Adir, 'Unzer natsionaler ideal un undzer nationale bavegung' (translation from Russian by H. Abramovitch), [1935], YIVO RG554, Box 1.

¹⁷³ Ben-Adir, 'Territorialism's Way' (1934), reprinted in: *Freeland* 2, no 1 (February 1946): 8-10: 9-10.

¹⁷⁴ These were Labour politician Lord Marley (Dudley Leigh Aman, 1st Baron Marley), Liberal M.P. Sir Dingle Mackintosh Foot, Labour M.P. Morgan Jones, and Conservative M.P. Vyvyan: 'Freeland Movement. League for Territorial Colonisation'. Report first international conference at Hotel Russell London, 17-21 July 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁷⁵ Kruk to Kessler, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

approach and he continued his predecessor's efforts to keep strong ties with British political circles and prominent individuals. In 1936, he proudly reported to Myer Nathan how Weizmann's adherence to the Freeland League had appeased important figures like Sir Philip Hartog and Redcliffe Salaman.¹⁷⁶ Steinberg also eagerly sought such broadly defined political support. His attempts to (re-)open relations with Norman Bentwich—in fact a close contact of Leftwich'—attest to this ambition.¹⁷⁷

However, more than the ITO before them, the New Territorialists mainly turned to left-wing and labourite circles in the United Kingdom and in the U.S. for support. For instance, a British advisory council was established, on which solely Labour politicians served: Arthur Creech Jones, D.N. Pritt, Archibald Fenner Brockway, John Paton, J.R. Strauss and John Wilmot.¹⁷⁸ In the United States, external support also predominantly came from labour-connected organisations. The fact that many of these bodies also supported Zionism shows a certain compatibility between Zionism and Territorialism.¹⁷⁹ So does the fact that in the larger Jewish labour debate over the choice between an internationalist or a socialist approach, the Jewish Socialist Territorialist Labor Party of America and the socialist Zionists of Poale Zion pitted together on the socialist side. However, Poale Zion was the only socialist Jewish party that openly supported Jewish autonomy in the Diaspora.¹⁸⁰

There were also several Jewish and non-Jewish labour organisations that affiliated themselves with Territorialism. In a report written in early 1944, Steinberg reflected on a meeting between representatives of the Freeland League and the Jewish Labor Committee, which represented 500,000 Jewish workers in the United States. Steinberg recognised that, so far, the focus of American Jewish labour had been on the rebuilding of Jewish life in Europe after the war. At the same time, Steinberg's report on his work in Australia did generate interest. Moreover, in December 1943, a letter was sent to the Australasian Council of Trade (ACTU), supporting the idea of Jewish immigration to Australia, and signed by representatives of the Jewish Labor Committee, as well as the Labor Amalgamated Bank, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU),

¹⁷⁶ Leftwich to Nathan, 19 October 1936, YIVO RG682/300.

¹⁷⁷ Steinberg to Norman Bentwich, 20 December 1937 and 6 March 1938, YIVO RG366/292. Apart from Leftwich, Josef Kruk already corresponded with Bentwich in 1935: Josef Kruk to Norman Bentwich (at the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees), 8 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁷⁸ Kruk to Moses Gaster, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁷⁹ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 111.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 100; David Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things: Jewish Autonomy in Late Habsburg Austria," *Leo Baeck Year Book* 52(2007): 103.

and the Arbeter Ring/Workmen's Circle.¹⁸¹ The latter organisation was the Freeland League's most important and influential supporter. This supportive attitude in left-wing circles also arose due to the Freelanders' affiliation with the so-called Landsmanshaften, which in 1944 even officially endorsed the Territorialists' work.¹⁸²

Despite this open and active support from labour organisations' leaderships, the Freeland League's connection to the larger labourite communities often appeared to be a one-sided love affair. The Territorialists realised the importance of the labour movements on both sides of the Atlantic. However, they did not manage to gain widespread support amongst labour-oriented Jews. This was largely due to the active Palestine-focused propaganda activities the Zionists were undertaking in these same circles, especially during and after the Second World War.¹⁸³

Nevertheless, in the U.K., the Freeland League found willing and, for some years at least, active supporters in Labour politicians Norman Angell, Morgan Jones, and Arthur Creech Jones. Creech Jones, who supported the Australian settlement scheme as early as 1935,¹⁸⁴ acted as a middleman on various occasions. He put Leftwich and later Steinberg in touch with leading British political figures on the Left, for instance Ernest Bevin.¹⁸⁵ His earlier enthusiasm for Zionism increasingly tempered,¹⁸⁶ he now encouragingly corresponded with Freelanders Herwald, offering several suggestions for the creation of commissions to prepare the Territorialist projects.¹⁸⁷ To Norman Angell, Steinberg wrote: "I feel greatly encouraged by your sympathy and understanding of the significance of this

¹⁸¹ Steinberg, 'Letter from Abroad, Freeland in New York', 2 March 1944, YIVO RG366/38; Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 56. As a result of these efforts, the ACTU, representing 1,2 million out of 7 million inhabitants, openly supported the Freeland League in 1944 against the negative government decision regarding Jewish colonisation in the Kimberley district: Steinberg to A. Sulzberger, 20 December 1944 and 2 February 1945, YIVO RG366/349; 'The Freeland League in Action', *Freeland* (August 1944): 8-9:8.

¹⁸² Steinberg to John L. Bernstein, 30 March 1944, YIVO RG366/77; 'The Freeland League in Action', *Freeland* (August 1944): 8-9:8; 'Jewish Labor Groups support the Freeland League', YIVO RG366/143.

¹⁸³ Jacob Pat (executive secretary of the Jewish Labor Committee) to Steinberg, 4 August 1943, YIVO RG366/26.

¹⁸⁴ Josef Kruk to Norman Bentwich (at the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees), 8 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1.

¹⁸⁵ Steinberg to Arthur Creech Jones, 9 November 1938, YIVO RG366/426; Creech Jones to Steinberg, 21 November 1938, YIVO RG366/426; Creech Jones to Leftwich, 24 December 1935, CZA A330/14; Creech Jones to Leftwich, 11 June 1937, CZA A330/15; Norman Angell to Steinberg, 19 October 1938 and 25 October 1938, YIVO RG366/389; Steinberg to Norman Angell 27 October 1938, YIVO RG366/389.

¹⁸⁶ Creech Jones' loss of sympathy for the Zionist cause was part of a larger disengagement from Zionism by certain parts of the British Labour Party that had communist leanings: Paul Kelemen, *The British Left and Zionism: History of a Divorce* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 95.

¹⁸⁷ Herwald to Creech Jones, 18 December 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

new movement, which", he added strategically, "in no way opposes the efforts in Palestine, but looks for a new outlet for the distressed Jewish masses."¹⁸⁸

Following Gabriel Haus' and Ben-Adir's Marxist sympathies, the Territorialists also frequently flirted with non-Jewish individuals and organisations that had communist leanings. Both the openly communist publisher Victor Gollancz and Lord Marley, who was deeply involved with Stalin's Birobidzhan project, were appointed honorary vice-presidents of the International Council of Friends of the Freeland Movement in 1935. Such affiliations occasionally posed difficulties for the Freeland League, which was trying to position itself neutrally in order not to antagonise potential partners. Steinberg was especially cautious in this respect. In 1938, he wrote to Myer Nathan, a former ITO-member, that the latter's proposal to invite both the later Lord Justice of Appeal, Lionel L. Cohen, and Gollancz to the same meeting, might cause some problems: Cohen had an important position within the Zionist Jewish Agency and, as mentioned, Gollancz was a communist.¹⁸⁹

Territorialists did not fullheartedly embrace either socialism or communism. Zangwill had officially attempted to prevent the Socialist-Territorialists from gaining too much influence. According to him, all socialist tendencies in Territorialism had to be avoided.¹⁹⁰ During the Freeland League's heydays, the Austrian Territorialist Hans Klein fulminated against the anti-religious communists, whose inspirator Karl Marx "is a worse and more dangerous enemy of Judaism than any anti-Semitic leader." The Marxist idea of a democracy emptied of religion was partly led by "Jewish renegades, who disgustingly filthy the nest from which they came"¹⁹¹ Socialist and communist "experiments" were to be excluded from the Territorialist activities. This view stands in stark contrast to the Territorialists' official position that "for us there are only Jews, no party people".¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Steinberg to Norman Angell, 27 October 1938, YIVO RG366/389.

¹⁸⁹ Steinberg to Nathan, 18 January 1938, YIVO RG366/450. Despite his Communist leanings, Gollancz would become increasingly critical of the Soviet regime, especially after the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany: Matthew Frank, "The New Morality—Victor Gollancz, 'Save Europe Now' and the German Refugee Crisis, 1945-46" *Twentieth Century British History* 17, no. 2 (2006): 236.

¹⁹⁰ 'Report of JTO Conference in Vienna 1912 (27, 28, 30 June)', YIVO RG255, Box 1. This stance is all the more striking as it had been the socialist strands in Zionism, first and foremost Poale Zion, who had lent Territorialism their open support from the beginning: Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness* (New York/Jerusalem: St. Martin's Press/Magnes Press, 1987), 284-7.

¹⁹¹ Original: "ist ein ärgerer und gefährlicher Feind des Judentums als irgendein antisemitischer Führer" and "jüdischer Renegaten, die das Nest, aus dem sie gekommen, aufs widerlichste beschmutzen": Klein to Leftwich, [1937], CZA A330/13.

¹⁹² Original: "[f]ür uns gibt es nur Juden, keine Parteimenschen": Schönberger to Leftwich, 16 October 1936, CZA A330/14.

Steinberg too propagated socialist ideals,¹⁹³ but had his own problematic Soviet past. He was a product of socialism, but, in Zuckerman's words, "not of the banal materialistic monstrosity which goes under that name in the Communist world, but of the Russian Socialism before Communism came on the scene".¹⁹⁴ In Steinberg's eyes, Soviet communism had forsaken its idealistic underpinnings. Consequently, he was engaged in socialist-revolutionary activities, and was not in favour of entertaining close relations with communist bodies or individuals.¹⁹⁵ He was even associated with anti-communists: in 1937, Steinberg appeared on the same speakers' list for a meeting about the Spanish Civil War as Emma Goldman, staunch anarchist and anti-communist. The two also corresponded during the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁹⁶ In this anti-communist spirit, Steinberg showed himself particularly upset by a dismissive reply to a request for a meeting with H.G. Wells:¹⁹⁷ "It seems to me that the dogmas of abstract Internationalism can hurt just as much as the lifel[e]ss dogmas of nationalism and chauvinism."¹⁹⁸

As we have already seen, not all Territorialists opposed communism this vehemently. Some Freelanders openly supported the Soviet Jewish Autonomous Region (JAR) in Birobidzhan. Although not a Territorialist initiative, the realisation of the autonomous Siberian settlement could serve as an inspiring example. Zalman Majzner, to be murdered by the Soviets some years later, castigated one of the central Polish Bundists, Henryk Ehrlich, for being sceptical about the Soviet project. Majzner's pro-Soviet sentiments appear from his polemical question, raised in 1934,

whom we can better trust, the Bundist Ehrlich, who says without any valid substantiation that Biro-Bidjan is no solution to the Jewish Question, or the official head of the Soviet Union, President Kalinin, who so clearly formulates the role of Biro-Bidjan as the undeniable and conclusive reply to

¹⁹³ Congratulations from Charles Zimmerman (International Ladies Garment Workers Union) on the occasion of Steinberg's sixtieth birthday: *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949).

¹⁹⁴ W. Zuckerman, 'Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5-6: 6.

¹⁹⁵ Already in 1925, while still working on behalf of YIVO, Steinberg resigned from the Initiative Group for YIVO's establishment to protest the invitation of Soviet representatives to a YIVO-conference: Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 100.

¹⁹⁶ Announcement public gathering about Spanish Revolution at Mile End Baths, Stepney, 31 March 1937, YIVO RG366/588; See also YIVO RG366/248 for links between Steinberg and anarchist Emma Goldman.

¹⁹⁷ Steinberg to H.G. Wells, 27 October 1938, YIVO RG366/479; Mrs. G.P. (Marjorie) Wells to Steinberg, 28 October 1938, YIVO RG366/479: "Mr Wells thinks that the establishment of a specifically Jewish colony anywhere is a matter for Jews alone. He would be interested only in a scheme for settlement irrespective of race or creed."

¹⁹⁸ Steinberg to Normal Angell, 30 October 1938, YIVO RG366/389.

the Jewish question within Russia, and is even prepared to permit into it some Jewish emigrés who had previously left Russia.¹⁹⁹

Steinberg, however, was unimpressed.²⁰⁰ For religious Freelanders like him, Birobidzhan was problematic, as such a Soviet project might not allow for observant Jews to raise their children as religiously Jewish.²⁰¹ Moreover, the underlying motives of the JAR were not based on humanitarian considerations, but on Stalin's ethnically inspired population transfer policies. Rovner even adds that the Soviets used Birobidzhan as a "cynical anti-Zionist tool".²⁰²

Even though several Territorialists were affiliated with socialist and communist movements and individuals, this did not mean that the ideas underlying Territorialism were socialist or communist in content. Despite the leftist affiliations of Territorialism in the 1930s, its cooperation with figures like Nathan Birnbaum during the same period shows that its aims and ideology equally appealed to individuals on other ends of the political spectrum. Leftwich tried to avoid any direct link between Territorialism and communism. After his Territorialist activities had ended, he continued to be critical of communist regimes during the 1940s, '50s and '60s, when he repeatedly raised questions about the disappearance and murder of Yiddish writers and actors in Russia.²⁰³

What did overlap with socialist thought was a certain communal ideal underlying the Territorialist project. This ideal encompassed a clear focus on agricultural work, scientific progress and the tilling of the land, elements that Territorialism had in common with socialist thinking. There was at the same time also a clear difference in approach. Already before the war, building on the work and ideas of the ITO before it, the Freeland League made it explicit that a Territorialist settlement was to be based on a business

¹⁹⁹ Mordecai W. Bernstein, 'Jubilee or Yortzeit? Biro-Bidjan After 30 Years', *Workmen's Circle Call* (1964), YIVO RG366/566.

²⁰⁰ Steinberg, 'Jewry's Threatened Millions, Mass Movement for Colonisation Required', *Jewish Chronicle*, (20 May 1938), CZA A330/86.

²⁰¹ [Herwald?] draft for: Herwald to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 June 1936, (eventually published in the *Jewish Chronicle* (28 June 1936), YIVO RG255, Box 2.

²⁰² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 120.

²⁰³ Goldsmith, *Joseph Leftwich at Eighty-Five*, 10. These observations support the notion, put forward by Olson, that the usual claim that Jewish intellectual radicalism in the Weimar period was exclusively leftward oriented does not hold. This is also proven by the work and thought of influential figures such as Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt. Birnbaum fit into this not necessarily leftist tradition, and, to a certain extent, so did Territorialism: Jess Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish Modernity: Architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 299.

model and not on philanthropy.²⁰⁴ Territorialism did not constitute a political agenda, but a speedy solution to an imminent problem.

Yiddishism

This speedy solution was not devoid of ideology. On the contrary, Zangwill had cherished a vision of a Jewish world mission. As we will see, Steinberg carried this conviction further, by defining it in even stronger moralistic terms. However, generally speaking, the second wave of Territorialism had significantly fewer reasons to hold on to its initial universalist beliefs. Xenophobia and anti-Semitic measures pushed almost all Jewish political actors in the direction of more particularistic Jewish ideals.²⁰⁵

While trying to negotiate elements of tradition and modernity, this move towards Jewish political particularism made the Territorialists embrace both religion and Yiddishism as parts of its programme. Strikingly, whereas many Yiddishists abandoned their efforts, Territorialism became increasingly invested in Yiddish language and culture. Kalmanovitch aligned himself with Territorialism exactly because he felt that this culture could only survive on an isolated Territorialist territory.²⁰⁶ If a large-scale Territorialist settlement would come about, Ben-Adir pondered, then instead of having a small Palestine with Arab opposition, such a project “would not foster a separate Hebraist tribe, but an organic part of our national body, interwoven closely with the popular culture of the Jewish masses—Yiddish”.²⁰⁷

Yiddishists were “Jewish culturists”²⁰⁸ who aspired to create a largely non-partisan, culture-focused, secular movement, inspired by Zhitlowsky’s neo-Romantic ideals. Perhaps this appreciation of Yiddish should be seen as an expression of language nationalism in the sense that philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder had imagined it: as the

²⁰⁴ A.o.: Schönberger to Leftwich, 17 January 1938, CZA A330/15.

²⁰⁵ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 19. Nathan Birnbaum, already as a Zionist, had dismissed any universalist language describing the Jews’ task to become a “light unto the nations” as apologetics for Jewish assimilation. Birnbaum found a way to incorporate such universalist discourse by arguing that a system of equality was ingrained in Judaism. Only by preserving Jewish life as Jewish could this system remain intact and be disseminated amongst non-Jews: Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 52, 63.

²⁰⁶ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 182. With this, Territorialist history defies Karlip’s conclusion that both Diaspora Nationalism and Yiddishism reached their end during the period 1939-1945: Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 150; Joshua Karlip, “At the Crossroads between War and Genocide: A Reassessment of Jewish Ideology in 1940,” *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (2005): 4-5. Not all Territorialists agreed that Territorialism should become a Yiddishist movement: Anonymous, ‘Lo Ze ha-Derekh’, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

²⁰⁷ Ben-Adir, ‘Territorialism’s Way’ (1934), reprinted in: *Freeland* 2, no 1 (February 1946): 8-10: 9.

²⁰⁸ Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution*, 3.

belief that languages carry essential national-cultural traits.²⁰⁹ Yiddish belonged to the Eastern Jew, who represented authenticity.²¹⁰ Moreover, in 1925, 11 million people, or three quarters of all Jews in the world, had Yiddish as their *mame loshn*, their native tongue.²¹¹

Zhitlowsky's and others' efforts had led to the 1908 Czernowitz Yiddish Language Conference. This conference, although not entirely successful in its aims, did serve to bring together diverse parties. They all shared an investment in Yiddish language and culture. Czernowitz also offered a platform for criticism against Hebraist Zionists. Bundist Esther Frumkin, for instance, openly declared her belief that Yiddish should be declared the national language of the Jewish people.²¹² Yiddish thus became an important element of the ever more turbulent reality of Jewish politics.²¹³

Other Jewish political actors, such as Nachman Syrkin, saw Yiddishism as a narrow Eastern European endeavour, ignoring the rich Jewish past.²¹⁴ Diaspora Nationalists increasingly shared such opinions. Karlip argues that these individuals lost faith in the prospects of Yiddishism after the 1920s, especially as they began to view modern Yiddish culture, an invention of the *Haskalah*, as mere window-dressing for assimilation.²¹⁵ In addition to the tension inherent in it between populism and elitism, Yiddishism's increasingly radical secularism as formulated by Zhitlowsky also proved problematic in an Eastern European Jewish reality that was still heavily determined by religion. Moreover, Yiddishism itself had to merge its new secular content with its religiously inspired view of Yiddish as a redemptive means.²¹⁶

This tension was solved, and with that Yiddishism partly salvaged, by the Yiddishist movement's connection to the United States. "American-styled" Yiddishism managed to overcome the previously seemingly unbridgeable gaps between religion and secularism, and particularism and integration. This new American-Yiddish culture in turn

²⁰⁹ Kenneth B. Moss, "Arnold in Aysheshok, Schiller in Shnipishok: Imperatives of 'Culture' in East European Jewish Nationalism and Socialism," *Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 3 (2009): 552. On Yiddishism and Folkism in interwar Poland, see Kalman Weiser's study on Noah Prylucki: Weiser, *Jewish People*.

²¹⁰ This romanticization of "Yiddishkeit" persists until the present day: Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York/London: Routledge, 1991), 34; Jeffrey Shandler, *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language & Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

²¹¹ Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 3.

²¹² Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 57, 36-7, 120; Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 121, n. 35.

²¹³ On the "[p]oliticization of the Language Question", see: Weiser, *Jewish People*, esp. 74-81.

²¹⁴ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 107.

²¹⁵ Karlip, "At the Crossroads," 172, 191.

²¹⁶ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 20-1; Moss, "Arnold in Eishyshok," 555. The tendency to de-religionize religious texts was not just a Diaspora Nationalist/Yiddishist endeavour. Hebrew national poet Bialik did the same: Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 154.

influenced the European scene. In this light, it is instructive to consider Tony Michels' adoption of a transnational framework, rather than a core-periphery approach, in his study of the export of Yiddish (socialist) literature. As Michels argues, the common scholarly assertion that American Jewry functioned as an "outpost" of European Jewry needs amending. In reality, the American-Jewish immigrant community was not a "replica" of European Jewry, but highly innovative in itself and ready to share these innovations with the rest of the Jewish world via the export of all sorts of cultural and political products.²¹⁷

Territorialism became part of these transnational Yiddishist circles as well. While the Freelanders' gaze was directed predominantly at the European colonial empires for the geographical location of the future Territorialist settlement(s), the Freeland League was also a transatlantic movement from the outset, and became even more so during the interwar period. It relied on American money, but also on intellectual input from its American adherents. This made it just as much a product of American as of European Jewry.

However, the Freeland League's involvement in Yiddishist circles in the interwar period should not be overstated. Whereas language did feature in the Territorialist designs, Steinberg was not particularly interested in investing in Yiddish. In a reply to a colleague's plea to settle the language issue, he stated that it was the first and foremost task of the Territorialists to save Jews, following a "sacred tradition of Jewish history and Jewish religion". He did not share the concerns of some about the preservation of Jewish culture in the future settlements:

There is no doubt that where large Jewish masses are concentrated, Jewish culture will flourish. It is premature and rather futile to indulge now in speculations about the type of cultural development in a new Jewish settlement. It is only important that at the cradle of the "Freeland" League there should stand people deeply imbued with Jewish spirit and Jewish culture in all its a[sp]ects.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Tony Michels, "Exporting Yiddish Socialism: New York's Role in the Russian Jewish Workers' Movement," *Jewish Social Studies* 16, no. 1 (2009): 3.

²¹⁸ H.N. Feld to Steinberg, 23 February 1939 and 11 March 1939; Steinberg to Feld, 6 March 1939, all in YIVO RG366/412.

This lax attitude on the part of Steinberg regarding Territorialist activities on behalf of Yiddish is all the more striking as only shortly before joining the Freeland League he had been active on behalf of YIVO.²¹⁹ As we will see, Steinberg's commitment to Yiddishism would resurge after the Second World War, and especially after Freeland's political ambitions became less attainable.

Tradition and Modernity

God helps those who help themselves. The hour is late. Let us set about in all seriousness to help ourselves.²²⁰

The Freeland League's connection to Yiddishist activities should be analysed in relation to its larger negotiation between elements of tradition and modernity. Territorialism is here considered as part of a broader trend in interwar Jewish political behaviour. An analysis of other movements' approaches to this dilemma is therefore illuminating. Joshua Karlip shows that Diaspora Nationalists increasingly retreated from Jewish politics, now focusing exclusively on cultural work. During this development, even though Diaspora Nationalists and Yiddishists in part rebelled against religious tradition, they also drew inspiration from it. They tried to save what they considered the core of Judaism by a return to a state of pre-modern Jewish political and cultural isolation.²²¹ After the growing anti-Jewish atmosphere had reached its height in the course of 1938, some prominent Diaspora Nationalists moved away from their intellectual "father" Simon Dubnow. For Dubnow, the Jewish religious past had been instrumental in forging the Jewish Diaspora nation. Nonetheless, he had insisted that Jewish nationality could not be reduced to religious definitions alone; Jews should not strive to establish an isolated ghetto, but to solely demonstrate and maintain their "distinction".²²²

By contrast, the younger generation of Diaspora Nationalists actively propagated a "return to the ghetto". By this they did not necessarily mean a return to religious society,

²¹⁹ Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 45, 142, 144.

²²⁰ Editorial, *Freeland* (August 1944): 2-6:3.

²²¹ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 4-5; Karlip, "At the Crossroads," 171.

²²² This attitude illustrates the tension Moss discerns in Russian-Jewish cultural circles following the 1917 Revolution between a Judaising or essentialising tendency, and the continued Jewish attachment to universalism. This tension, argues Moss, complicates an overly simplistic understanding of modern Jewish culture as the effort to create a synthesis between tradition and modernity: Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution*, 282.

but an abandonment of European civilisation, as well as a reformulation of the Jewish unity that had existed in pre-modern times.²²³ The rise of Nazism served to push forward this development, and made an involuntary return to Jewish isolation acceptable.²²⁴ Rabinovitch' assertion that this renewed attachment to religion meant a failure of the Diaspora Nationalist political ambitions is thus incorrect: in the minds of the main actors involved this return led to an adjustment of this program, rather than spelling its end. Diaspora Nationalist Avrom Golomb, writing in 1939, even saw traditional Jewish life as a means for progress: "Because *whatever cannot move forward with the tradition will inevitably be obliterated in popular memory.*"²²⁵ Efroikin added that separatism was preferable to a loss of identity: it was better to be half citizens if this meant to remain complete Jews.²²⁶

Kalmanovitch, Tcherikower, and Golomb—all in one way or another affiliated with the Freeland League—argued that Emancipation had only led to Assimilation and an increased ability of the state to crush Jews. Therefore, internal cultural and religious revival, rather than outwardly focused political work was needed.²²⁷ In this vein, Efroikin eventually embraced the traditional Jewish communal system of *kehillot*, which before, as a socialist autonomist, he had rejected as outdated and backward.²²⁸ Polish Territorialist Hillel Zeitlin saw religion as being at the core of Jewish national revival, alongside, but equal to Jewish culture.²²⁹ Not only Diaspora Nationalists and Territorialists propagated such a withdrawal from modernity. Abraham Menes left Bundism in 1932, arguing that neither socialism, nor Diaspora Nationalism, nor Yiddishism had furthered the Jewish cause. The only solution he now saw remaining was a return to a traditional form of Jewish culture, which ironically had proven more democratic and socialist than any of its modern Jewish counterparts.²³⁰

The Freeland League represented both the more traditional, inward-looking, culturalist elements, and the optimistic ambitions of interwar Jewish political behaviour. Territorialism, although mainly in line with Zhitlowsky's and the younger Diaspora

²²³ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 186, 191, 193, 197, 201, 205; Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 27, 40.

²²⁴ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 200, 307.

²²⁵ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, xxxii, 195.

²²⁶ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 205, 247.

²²⁷ Ibid., 243; Karlip, "At the Crossroads," 175, 177, 178, 179, 192; Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 189.

²²⁸ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 126.

²²⁹ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 58.

²³⁰ Karlip, "At the Crossroads," 173, 176.

Nationalists' isolationist approach, was still also "Dubnowist" in its inclusiveness. The Territorialists adhered to Dubnow's belief in the value of Emancipation and the political power it had granted the Jews.²³¹ For Dubnow, regional differences were insignificant, as they would prevent the conception of one coherent Jewish tribe, a "Volksstamm".²³² Therefore, whereas the earlier, predominantly Western Territorialists had shown issues with dealing with their colleagues in the East, the importance of an active cooperation across the East-West divide became much more acknowledged during the Freeland-era.²³³

This incorporation of the East allowed new space for traditional religious elements in Territorialist thinking. Under the leadership of Leftwich and especially Steinberg, the Freelanders' use of religious language was based on genuine religious beliefs. Diaspora Nationalists did feel that they needed to rely on religious traditions to appeal to the masses, as purely secular cultural customs were hard to find in Judaism. However, for them, religion was mainly a means to preserve what they saw as the essence of Judaism, defined in secular terms like language and culture. In an increasingly secularising world, modern Jewish nationalism could be seen as a new public religion.²³⁴

Still, like in the case of the Territorialists, truly religiously inspired goals and practices led some Diaspora Nationalists to embrace utopian ideals. Such ideals coexisted with an explicitly secular worldliness, combined with an awareness of the problematic political and societal realities with which Jews had to grapple. These individuals did not move away from their traditional roots, but also did not fully return to them.²³⁵ All this led to what Jonathan Frankel has termed the "paradoxical politics of marginality".²³⁶ Regardless of whether this somewhat dismissive typification is a fair one, the dual commitment to realism and utopianism, to modernity and tradition in Diaspora Nationalism did allow for the formulation of a new version of Jewish messianism that was no longer directly connected to Jewish tradition.²³⁷

²³¹ Ibid., 173, 183.

²³² Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 14.

²³³ Majzner to Leftwich, 21 October 1935, CZA A330/13; Schönberger to Leftwich, 26 November 1936, CZA A330/14; Klein and Schönberger to Leftwich, 8 February 1937, CZA A330/86; Ginsburg to Zangwill, 9 July 1914, CZA A36/3.

²³⁴ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 3, 61, 86, 88.

²³⁵ Ibid., 130, 312.

²³⁶ Quoted in: Ibid., 148.

²³⁷ Ibid., 173-4.

Nathan Birnbaum

The Freeland League was not explicitly religious, but it did show increasing appreciation for and affiliation with religious elements and personalities.²³⁸ Moreover, both Steinberg and Leftwich were religiously observant Jews. The most famous and intriguing of the religious Freeland-affiliates was Nathan Birnbaum, whose Jewish People's Service (Jüdische Volks Dienst, JPS) became a close Freeland affiliate around the time of Birnbaum's death in 1937. Birnbaum, arguably an "Ur-Zionist",²³⁹ is generally credited with the coining of the term "Zionism" in 1890. He left the Zionist movement early on, turned to Jewish orthodoxy via Diaspora Nationalism, and became one of the central figures in the anti-Zionist orthodox Agudath Israel party, before eventually leaving this party as well. After moving from Germany to the Dutch coast in 1933, he established the JPS, which remained active after his death.

Birnbaum's orthodoxy was not of the clear-cut kind. According to his son Uriel, Birnbaum the elder had been convinced that his ideological and religious wanderings had broadened his horizon, thereby enriching his position in Jewish life and on the Jewish political scene. He was credited with exclaiming during a meeting with a Jewish youth group in Vienna: "Oh, you understand nothing! Did you [e]ver eat a butter ham sandwich on Yum Kippur? I'm sure you didn't. Well, I did..."²⁴⁰

Where Olson (re-)establishes Birnbaum as one of the more immediate "forerunners"—to borrow Jacob Katz' terminology—²⁴¹ of political Zionism, he similarly fulfils this role for Territorialism. Through Olson's review of Birnbaum's position within the so-called Jewish Renaissance Movement during the early years of the twentieth century, a group which included figures like Martin Buber and Chaim Weizmann, Birnbaum emerges as a central player in the endeavour to transform Jewish nationalism into the most modern form of Jewish identity. As Olson convincingly argues, for Birnbaum, his involvement with the Jewish Renaissance Movement meant his definite detachment from mainstream Zionism. He now moved towards non-territorial Jewish autonomy in

²³⁸ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 10.

²³⁹ Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 94.

²⁴⁰ Uriel Birnbaum, 'My Father Nathan Birnbaum', *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1953): 6-7: 6.

²⁴¹ Jacob Katz, "The Forerunners of Zionism," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (London: Cassell, 1996).

the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, and eventually also embraced the Yiddish language and culture.²⁴²

Like Territorialists such as Alfred Döblin and Zangwill, Birnbaum held a growing fascination with what he saw as authentic Judaism in Eastern Europe. Western Jewry was more divorced from its own history and culture, and therefore it was important, for the sake of Judaism as a whole, to preserve this true Jewish life in the East. Olson sees this realisation as a crucial factor in Birnbaum's turn to orthodoxy.²⁴³ Also similar to Territorialism was Birnbaum's "Israel before Zion" ideology: the preservation of the Jewish nation was of the greatest importance, after which the land would follow automatically. Therefore, Jewish nationalism could take forms that differed from political Zionism, even that of the "Habsburg loyalism" that Birnbaum propagated for some years.²⁴⁴

Like Zangwill and Steinberg, Birnbaum believed that all Jews faced the same external threats and should therefore work together.²⁴⁵ Zionism had been unsuccessful because of its lack of a unifying approach. Rather than being a secession from Zionism—Palestine as part of the Jewish future was not at all off the table for Birnbaum—Birnbaum's Jewish People's Party (JPP), established in the 1890s, constituted a reinvention of it, much like Territorialism would later view itself as a reformulation and improvement of Zionism.²⁴⁶

The JPS, three decades later, cherished aims that were similar to those of its predecessor. What had changed were the proposed means to achieve these aims. Before, these means had consisted of creating a unifying platform for Jews in the Diaspora, but now they had shifted to the search for a territorial emigration solution for Jews, outside Europe. Similar to Territorialism, the organisation propagated "the settlement of [E]uropean Jews on territories which were not vastly populated and based on [a]

²⁴² Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 123; Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, xxxi; Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 104.

²⁴³ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 11-2, 41. Noah Isenberg mentions Birnbaum as an important advocate for a renewed appreciation of Eastern European Jewish culture and tradition (especially the Yiddish language), specifically amongst German-speaking Jews: Noah William Isenberg, *Between Redemption and Doom: The Strains of German-Jewish Modernism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 47-8, 54.

²⁴⁴ Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 94, 96.

²⁴⁵ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 45, 49-50.

²⁴⁶ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 70, 83, 85, 94, 102, 105, 115-6, 137, 157; Rechter, "A Nationalism of Small Things," 100.

religious national basis without doing any harm to Palestine".²⁴⁷ During the late 1930s, the Jewish People's Service actively corresponded with a wide array of organisations and individuals to communicate the need it saw for the establishment of Jewish settlements across the globe.²⁴⁸

Just before his death, Birnbaum became exceedingly critical of the Zionist movement. To this end, he published some anti-Zionist texts in which he alluded to his preferred Territorialist scheme, without explicitly mentioning the Territorialist movement. According to Birnbaum, the direction secular Zionism had taken in denying the importance of religion was faulty. Moreover, he agreed with the Zionist Revisionists that a binational solution was not a real solution. However, a one-state solution, still preferred by most Zionists, was unrealistic. This did not mean that the work in Palestine needed to be abandoned, but "it is dangerous to stick obstinately to the old illusions, or violently force ourselves to believe that Eretz Yisroel is the only place[.] [...] As by enchantment the gaze of all is fixed on the one spot, Palestine". Birnbaum disapproved of the active Zionist sabotaging of non-Zionist initiatives outside of Palestine. He considered religious arguments that claimed that only Palestine could attract the Jewish masses to be hypocritical and invalid. What was more, he saw orthodox Jewry-turned-Zionist as relying on a "borrowed practical ideal", adopted from secular Zionism. Such an ideal, explaining away the religious Jewish objections to an active political return to Eretz Israel, weakened the religious Jewish position.²⁴⁹

This strict vision of Jewish religion on the part of Birnbaum did not mean that investing in the Diaspora for him meant striving towards the rebirth of some ancient conception of Judaism or Hebraism. On the contrary, and again like the Territorialists, Birnbaum was convinced that modern Jewish nationalism had to be born out of the actual experience of the Diaspora. For him, a Jewish renaissance did not mean a return to pre-modern times: "What is dead cannot be reborn, and that which is still alive does not need

²⁴⁷ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 1-2; 'Dr. N. Birnbaum in Jewish Peoples Service', interview with Henri van Leeuwen, [date unknown], YIVO RG366/358; Handwritten copy telegram Van Leeuwen to President Conseil des Nations Secretariat General s.d. Nations, 28 January 1938, YIVO RG366/493.

²⁴⁸ Among these correspondents were Pope Pius XI, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Commission Intergouvernementale Consulative pour les Réfugiés, as well as the important Polish Labour Zionist leader Arjeh Tartakower, who in response declared his support of the settlement idea: Correspondence with annexes of Jewish People's Service (JPS), 1938, YIVO RG366/23; Tartakower to JPS, [1938], YIVO RG366/23.

²⁴⁹ Nathan Birnbaum, 'The New and Broader Road', [1937], YIVO RG366/358. Birnbaum's Territorialist ideas demonstrate a move away from his earlier reservations to Jewish settlement locations that were geographically far removed from Palestine. This earlier stance is described in Almog, *Zionism and History*, 239-40.

to be reborn.”²⁵⁰ The Freelanders wholeheartedly agreed. After all, Zangwill had declared the past a source of inspiration, but most definitely not a basis for imitation.²⁵¹

Birnbaum’s involvement in the organisation in 1908 of the Yiddish Language Conference in Czernowitz should be seen in the light of this belief in the reality of the contemporary Jewish experience.²⁵² For Birnbaum, the preservation of a “Gelus [exile]-Nationalism” carried a clear religious meaning and served to maintain Jewish religious culture and tradition, while at the same time ascribing to it a modern meaning.²⁵³ Echoing later Territorialist, as well as cultural Zionist ideas, Birnbaum believed in territorial concentration in the Diaspora, and in the transformation of Palestine into both an emigration destination and a spiritual centre.²⁵⁴

Perhaps surprisingly, considering his Yiddishist attachments, Birnbaum focused on race, rather than on language or shared nationality as the binding factor for the Jewish nation. He developed this way of thinking in his political philosophy of “racial materialism”, based on national and socialist convictions.²⁵⁵ Race and racialism (by which I mean the use of racial terms, without necessarily attaching any value judgement) were also keywords for the Territorialists in defining the aims and methods of their movement.²⁵⁶

Birnbaum was widely respected in various Jewish circles and attracted large audiences during his lifetime. His essays on Jewish nationalism, written during the 1890s, contributed tremendously to the early course taken by the new Zionist movement, soon to be consolidated in the creation of the Zionist Organisation in 1897. However, Olson blames Birnbaum’s embrace of (non-Zionist) orthodoxy for the general lack of scholarly attention for the Yiddishist leader.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, his political choices in support of Territorialism during the later years of his life might be another reason, even though this

²⁵⁰ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 157; Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 46-7.

²⁵¹ Zangwill, “A Territorial Solution of The Jewish Problem,” (reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, April 1919), *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945) 11-13: 12-13.

²⁵² Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 157. Weiser describes Birnbaum’s Yiddishism as political rather than scholarly: through his political activities and publications, he was “chiefly occupied with status planning” for Yiddish: Weiser, *Jewish People*, 261.

²⁵³ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 133, 148, 168; Joshua Shanes, “Yiddish and Jewish Diaspora Nationalism,” *Monatshefte* 90, no. 2 (1998): 178-188.

²⁵⁴ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 150.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 62, 111-2. These ideas were close to those of Zionist sociologist Arthur Ruppin, who believed in the “racial value” of the Jews as a national entity: Amos Morris-Reich, “Arthur Ruppin’s Concept of Race,” *Israel Studies* 11, no. 3 (2006): 1-30.

²⁵⁶ Morris-Reich points out that the distinction between “racism” and “racialism” is not always clear: Morris-Reich, “Arthur Ruppin,” 3.

²⁵⁷ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 8-10, 120-1. One exception to this tendency to largely disregard Birnbaum’s role in the development of early Zionism is Almog, *Zionism and History*.

support shows that his commitment to Jewish politics and culture persisted until his death in 1937.²⁵⁸

This support and commitment was confirmed by Birnbaum's sons Solomon and Uriel, who published articles in *Freeland* in 1947 and 1953 respectively. Solomon argued that especially towards the end of his life, Territorialism had been the national-political movement closest to his father's heart. The elder Birnbaum had believed that a concentrated agricultural settlement outside Palestine would best serve the future of Jewish traditionalism: "The anarchy of Jewish life could be remedied, not through the establishment of an interterritorial statelike organization, but through religious and spiritual ties, through an All-Israel Congregation."²⁵⁹ Such agricultural settlements would act as moralising endeavours that would also divert part of the "unsanctifying" flux of immigrants into Palestine. Uriel also added that Birnbaum senior had been one of the first to point out the importance of including Arabs in the planning of Palestine.²⁶⁰

Even though in the early 1920s, Nachman Syrkin and Shmuel Niger (another Freeland-affiliate) had dismissed Birnbaum for his betrayal to secular Jewish politics,²⁶¹ Steinberg fullheartedly agreed with Birnbaum's appreciation of agriculture as a way to redeem Jews and Jewishness.²⁶² As we will see, this focus on agriculture, or, more specifically, *agro-industry*, would become a key element of the Freeland League's vision for the Jewish future.

Diaspora

Birnbaum's and the Territorialists' activities on behalf of Jewish life and tradition bring us to a more explicit assessment of the Territorialists' stance towards the diasporic communities. After all, much of the justification for the Territorialist movement's existence was based on its close relationship with these dispersed groups. Especially the Polish Territorialists focused on Jewish life in Poland in addition to their preparations for a Territorialist settlement in the immediate or long-term future. These two tasks were also mutually reinforcing. Diaspora life needed to be maintained, but also expanded, if not

²⁵⁸ Curiously enough, as also Rovner signals, Olson barely mentions the existence of the JPS, let alone of its Territorialist affiliations: Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 264, n.66.

²⁵⁹ Solomon Birnbaum, 'Nathan Birnbaum, Non-Conformist', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May-June 1947): 15-16: 16.

²⁶⁰ Uriel Birnbaum, 'My Father Nathan Birnbaum', *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1953): 6-7.

²⁶¹ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum*, 105-6, 255-6.

²⁶² Krutikov, "Isaac Nahman Steinberg," 18.

in Europe, then in the future Territorialist settlement. To this end, in 1938, a special group was set up to propagate the Freeland idea amongst assimilated Polish Jews.²⁶³

Gegenwartsarbeit

This investment in *Gegenwartsarbeit*, based on the (Bundist) concept of *Doikeyt* ("hereness"), was in part a way for the Freelanders to differentiate themselves from the Zionists. As the orthodox faction of the Warsaw branch stated: "We do not wish to be mere supplicants nor will we engage solely in propaganda and agitation for a Jewish land, but we will *live* a Freeland life here and now."²⁶⁴ In a speech delivered in London in 1943, Leftwich described both Zangwill and himself as believers in the Diaspora. "Not all of us agree that the Galuth [Diaspora] is played out. [...] [It is] indestructible. If all Israel's enemies have not succeeded in destroying the Diaspora, it may well defend even his own efforts." This attachment to the *galut* notwithstanding, it was the task of the Territorialists to create options for those who did not wish or could not stay in the current Diaspora.²⁶⁵

This opinion was shared by one of the most famous Freeland affiliates, the German-Jewish author Alfred Döblin, whose *Berlin, Alexanderplatz* (1929) belongs to the classics of European literature. In late 1933, he co-founded the Ligue Juive pour Colonisation, which was to become the Parisian branch of the Freeland League. He also published in the short-lived Warsaw-based Territorialist periodical *Frayland*. In 1935, Döblin introduced fellow author Thomas Mann to Territorialism. This led to an affiliation that would outlast Döblin's own connection to the Freeland League.²⁶⁶ As for the Jewish Diaspora, Döblin, at the first London Freeland Conference in 1935, declared that there could be no fetish of land at the cost of people, clearly referring to Zionism's preoccupation with Palestine. "More important than the land is the Volk", he had written that same year. Zionism had so far treated the Diaspora as its treasury, but now this Diaspora came with demands of its own. The big question was whether Zionism could

²⁶³ L. Lapin, 'Freeland in Poland', *Freeland* 3. No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947) 8, 16: 8.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Speech Leftwich at rebirth ITO on 14 February 1943 at Royal Hotel, CZA A330/13, pp. 3-4; Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 265.

²⁶⁶ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 123, 127. For more about Döblin's involvement with Territorialism, see Adam Rovner, "Promised Lands: Alfred Döblin as a Territorialist Ideologue," *Maarav*, no. 4 (2012). Rovner ascribes to Döblin the role of the Freeland League's main early ideologue. Despite the importance for Territorialism of being able to count such a prominent figure to its main advocates, Rovner seems to exaggerate Döblin's ideological centrality.

transform itself from an organisation for Palestine into an organisation for the people. Döblin severely doubted this and therein saw a task for Territorialism.²⁶⁷

For Döblin, who left the movement in late 1937 or early 1938,²⁶⁸ his affiliation with Territorialism may have been an in-between-stage on the way from an idealistic belief in non-political humanist socialism, via Jewish particularism, to his eventual embrace of Catholicism as the most harmonious system.²⁶⁹ After all, Döblin left out any reference to his Territorialist past from his later biography.²⁷⁰ It is nevertheless telling that Döblin chose Territorialism, rather than Zionism, Bundism, Folkism or any other strand of Jewish politics as the framework for his belief in the forging of a Jewish "Volk" as a way to preserve a Jewish future. Territorialism offered a practical and territorially undogmatic approach, in which both secularism and a modern valorisation of religion could have their place. After his death in 1957, the Freelanders showed their continued appreciation of Döblin's contribution to their movement, despite existing criticism of his religious conversion and return to Germany. Michael Astour apologetically proposed that Döblin's later-life choices might have been the result of a senile crisis. His decisions of the 1950s therefore did not diminish his contributions to Territorialism during the 1930s.²⁷¹

Anti-Semitism

The Holocaust constituted a decisive turning point for most ways of thinking about a Jewish future in Europe. For one, it transformed the Zionist movement from an instrument of redemption for the Diaspora into the ideological rationale of a political state.²⁷² Already before the war, conditions for European Jews were deteriorating and numerous Jewish plans were made to try and solve these problems: the resurrection of Territorialism in the mid-1930s provides a prime example of this development.

²⁶⁷ Alfred Döblin, *Tsil Un Karakter Fun Der Frayland-Bavegung [Address at Freeland Conference, London, July 1935]* (Warsaw 1935); Leftwich, *What Will Happen to the Jews?*, 215-6; George L. Mosse, *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 149; Alfred Döblin, *Flucht und Sammlung des Judentums: Aufsätze und Erzählungen* (Amsterdam: Querido Verlag n. v., 1935).

²⁶⁸ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 128. In late 1938, he was still in touch with Steinberg, when he asked him for help to get his brother and sister-in-law out of Germany and into England: Alfred Döblin to Steinberg, 8 December 1938 and 14 December 1938, YIVO RG366/210.

²⁶⁹ Mosse, *Masses and Men*, 148-50.

²⁷⁰ Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, "Emancipation and the Liberal Offer," in *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, eds. Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 9, n.13.

²⁷¹ M[ichael] A[stour], 'Alfred Döblin (1879-1957)', *Freeland* 11, no. 2 (July-Sept. 1958): 12-13; 'Alfred Doeblin -Letter And Reply', *Freeland* 12, no. 2 (Oct.-Nov. 1959): 4, 15.

²⁷² David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past : European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 73.

Because of their knowledge in hindsight of what was to come, historians have demonstrated difficulties with writing about interwar Jewish history without relying on the Shoah as a point of reference. After all, one could ask, how can one write about European Jews in the 1930s without including the imminent catastrophe towards which all contemporary Jewish paths were leading?²⁷³ Such a premise can create an unnecessarily normative assessment of Jewish political actors of the past. Ezra Mendelsohn, for instance, states that nothing was more tragic than “the continued professions of patriotism on the part of the integrationist leaders [...] in the face of the antisemitic onslaught.”²⁷⁴ David Nirenberg therefore sees the Shoah as casting a long backward shadow on Jewish history, as far back as medieval Iberia. After the Holocaust, historians have attempted to find continuities of anti-Jewish violence, willingly or unwillingly using the Holocaust experience to make sense of the centuries preceding it.²⁷⁵ (David Engel has argued that nowadays the scholarly scale has tipped over, with historians ignoring the Holocaust altogether in order to avoid this “backshadowing”, thus limiting Jewish interwar scholarship in an entirely opposite manner.²⁷⁶)

Few if any of the pre-war political actors, although they sensed that something needed to be done quickly, were able to grasp the extent and scope of the imminent tragedy. Labelling Territorialism as “catastrophic Zionism”, as some have tended to do,²⁷⁷ does not do justice to the Territorialist reality, which was defined by an optimistic approach to the future of Jewish culture, language and tradition. Despite this optimism, the Freelanders had no illusions regarding the dangers of anti-Semitism. Therefore, the Holocaust did not constitute a watershed moment for the Freeland League’s aims and ambitions. From its very foundation, the movement’s members voiced explicit concerns about the threat that increasing European anti-Semitism posed, not only to Jewish culture

²⁷³ Birnbaum and Katznelson, “Emancipation and the Liberal Offer,” 12, n.23.

²⁷⁴ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 118.

²⁷⁵ David Nirenberg, “Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain,” *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 1079.

²⁷⁶ Quoted in Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 14. The term “backshadowing” in relation to the Holocaust was first introduced by Michael Bernstein: Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Michael André Bernstein, “Victims-in-Waiting: Backshadowing and the Representation of European Jewry,” *New Literary History* 29, no. 4 (1998).

²⁷⁷ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 222; Gur Alroey, “Mesopotamia – ‘The Promised Land’: The Jewish Territorial Organization Project in the *Bilād Al-Rāfidayn* and the Question of Palestine, 1899-1917”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 6 (2014): 916. For an analysis of the meaning of “catastrophic Zionism”, see David Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1982), 470-5.

and tradition, but also to the actual survival of individual Jews. In a way, the Territorialists anticipated the imminent catastrophe.

In a 1935 article entitled 'Vor der Katastrophe' ('Before the Catastrophe'), Steinberg warned against a world catastrophe for Jews.²⁷⁸ More explicitly, Herwald wrote to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1936 that if no territorial outlets would be found for the European Jews, "the largest part of the Jewish people will be condemned to die".²⁷⁹ The following year, Steinberg warned against the "threat to world peace" that fascist anti-Semitism posed.²⁸⁰ The draft version of the Freeland League memorandum to the Evian Conference in 1938 stated that the recent move from persecution on religious and political bases to persecution on pseudo-racial grounds "enhances in a way that can scarcely be described the cruelty of the case". It continued: "We are dealing here with the deliberate and planned extinction of a community, only differing from the Armenian persecutions in that it is not done in a moment, with a knife, but in a cold and slowly protracted pogrom, whose agony continues from year to year."²⁸¹ And, in another draft: "We know that in war time it will be impossible to solve radically and in its entirety the Jewish refugee problem. But on the other hand it is unpermissible to leave the Jews in Europe in the hands of our enemy who is going to exterminate them, until there will be no more Jews in Western and Southern Europe[.]"²⁸²

These sentences were scratched out on this draft and omitted from the eventual Evian memorandum. Nonetheless, they form painful proof of the fact that the enormity of the Shoah could not have been predicted by even the most pessimistic of Territorialists: the "cold and slowly protracted pogrom" would soon turn into calculated mass murder. Nonetheless, because of their already grim expectations, the Holocaust would eventually also not come as a total shock or surprise to the Territorialists. It simply reinforced the Freeland Leaguers conviction that different territorial outlets needed to be found for the Jewish survivors, although these efforts should not be abused to force Jews out of the countries of their current dwelling.²⁸³

²⁷⁸ Wallat, *Oktoberrevolution*, 24.

²⁷⁹ Herwald to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 June 1936, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

²⁸⁰ Steinberg, "Where Are the Jews to Go?", reprinted in Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg*, 33.

²⁸¹ Freeland League, London, Draft memorandum 'To the Chairman and Delegates of the Conference for Refugees in Evian' (signed by C. Seligman (honorary president), L. Kessler (chairman), I. Steinberg (secretary)), 25 June 1938, YIVO RG554, Box 1, folder 4.

²⁸² Handwritten addition to Evian memorandum, 25 June 1938, YIVO RG554, Box 1, folder 7.

²⁸³ Gabriel Haus, "Jews and the Post-War World [Pamphlet]," ed. Freeland League (London 1941), 14.

Place, Space, Science and Agriculture

Your idea sounds slightly crackpot, or visionary, depending on the point of view. However, I believe you are sincere, so send me literature.

Thus wrote a young American Jew to Freeland League headquarters, after receiving some publication material.²⁸⁴ Following broader geopolitical developments and similar to other Jewish organisations, the Territorialists became increasingly interested in socio-economic research and global migratory trends.²⁸⁵ One manifestation of this was a re-appreciation of agricultural work. However, the Freeland project was to be modern, not solely aimed at the creation of another agricultural settlement, but at a cooperative *agro-industrial* one, possibly even with exporting ambitions.²⁸⁶ This far-reaching interest in modern agro-industrial colonisation methods is exemplified by the fact that Paris-based Territorialist Boris Brutzkus also served on the Committee for the Study of Agriculture, Industry, and Immigration in the same city. During the mid-1930s, this committee managed to secure an agreement for colonisation in Ecuador. The plan soon disappeared off the table due to Ecuadorian hesitance to host an exclusively Jewish minority.²⁸⁷

Zhitlowsky, an “agrarian socialist”, idealised agricultural life,²⁸⁸ and “agriculture” and “agro-industrial” became key words in the Territorialist discourse. The Freelanders’ were critical of Zionist policies, but the Zionist project in Palestine, as well as the Soviet Birobidzhan scheme, had shown that there were enough suitable Jewish settlers available.²⁸⁹ Generally speaking, Jewish agricultural settlements were *en vogue*: several

²⁸⁴ Lester Meyers to Freeland League, 29 October 1944, YIVO RG366/158.

²⁸⁵ Jonathan Frankel, “Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography,” in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steve Zipperstein (Cambridge: 2004), 18, 34, n.63.

²⁸⁶ Steinberg to French Minister of Overseas Territories (“Ministre de la France d’Outre-Mer”), [1] October 1946, YIVO RG366/583; Editorial, *Freeland* (August 1944): 2-6; Steinberg, ‘The Three Roads’, *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 1-3; 2; Steinberg, “Where Are the Jews to Go?”, reprinted in Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg*, 32.

²⁸⁷ Kruk to W.N. Ewer (*Daily Herald* and ‘friend’ of Freeland), 10 August 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 1; ‘2000 square miles of land for exiles. Londoners to Inspect Ecuador’s Gift’, *Evening Standard* (6 March 1936), YIVO RG255, Box 1.

²⁸⁸ Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*, 82.

²⁸⁹ Herwald to Creech Jones, 18 December 1935, YIVO RG255, Box 2; Haus, “Jews and the Post-War World [Pamphlet],” 13. Frank Wolff stresses that Birobidzhan should indeed be reassessed, not for its generally perceived failure, but for its importance to the larger story of interwar Jewish migrations: Wolff, “Global Walls,” 196.

non-Territorialist initiatives of this kind attest to this.²⁹⁰ Frank Wolff has shown that when assessed on a transnational level, the interwar period reveals more large-scale Jewish migration movement than the rigid immigration policies of many countries would suggest. Especially in South America communities grew significantly, and these communities were mostly organised as agricultural settlements. Jewish immigrants thus became white farmers, also because in these areas professional and religious criteria were seen as more important than racial origins.²⁹¹

Jews had thus not traditionally avoided becoming farmers, as British fascist Charles W. Gore asserted in his attack on the British Guiana plan.²⁹² On the contrary, not only did they embrace agricultural work, they were also surprisingly good at it. History had shown Jews to be one of the most adaptable peoples in the world. Their non-Aryan status was not only an anti-Semitic pawn, but could actually work in favour of Jewish colonisation plans as well.

In 1936, Polish Territorialist David Karten relied on such biopolitical arguments to promote Silesian Jews' agricultural abilities. Karten hoped to convince the French colonial minister to grant parts of the French overseas territories to Jewish agricultural settlement programs. As we have seen, the Blum-government officially declared its interest in such a scheme in 1937. However, the local Malagasi press was unconvinced: it believed Jews would not remain agriculturists.²⁹³ The Freelanders obviously disagreed: "Sparrow", the Freeland youth organisation in Wilna, counted around 250 members and organised agricultural training farms. The Freeland League's periodical for its youth members was tellingly named *The Pioneer*. By 1939, the Warsaw group was preparing a second farm training program, close to the city of Częstochowa, which never came about due to the outbreak of war.²⁹⁴ Perhaps naively, Steinberg assured Australian officials that Jewish settlers would never leave the settlement for the cities to become "a charge on the

²⁹⁰ Several such plans were explored during the 1930s, for instance in the South of France and on Corsica: Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 158-60.

²⁹¹ Wolff, "Global Walls," esp. 197, 193-4. Wolff divides the main destinations for Jews in these years into four categories: new nations (in Latin America), imperial communities (mainly in the British Empire and South Africa), gateways (a.o. Cuba, Japan, Shanghai, Manchuria, Bolivia), and planned communities (Biro-Bidjan, Dominican Republic, Birobidzhan, Ecuador, Manchukuo, better-known as the Fugu Plan). Surprisingly, of these four, the gateway communities had most chances of leading to successful permanent settlements: Wolff, "Global Walls," 193-4, 195-7.

²⁹² Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 92.

²⁹³ Jennings, "Writing Madagascar," 200-1, 205.

²⁹⁴ L. Lapin, 'Freeland in Poland', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 8, 16: 8.

Government".²⁹⁵

To establish an agro-industrial settlement, the Territorialists needed space: *empty* space. As introduced in Chapter 1, this approach of movement, resettlement and exchange of populations to such supposedly "empty spaces" was not at all uncommon in the shifting world order of the 1930s and 1940s. Even when solely focusing on Jews, a contemporary observer could repeatedly come across various plans, suggestions or allusions to optional territorial outlets, proposed by a wide array of individuals and institutions.²⁹⁶

These trends in world population politics were also strongly connected to internationalist thought,²⁹⁷ which made them an ever better fit with Territorialist and especially Steinberg's outlooks and ambitions. The notion that internationalism and nationalism are "contradictory impulses" is of relatively recent date. Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the conviction prevailed that a strengthening of national identity and awareness would contribute to world peace.²⁹⁸ This notion lay at the basis of the Territorialists' belief that Jewish territorial nationhood (but not statehood!) would contribute to the betterment of humankind. Simultaneously, British imperial thought shaped internationalism, especially during the interwar period.²⁹⁹ The Territorialist attachment to "empty spaces" in a colonial setting therefore did not contradict with the movement's internationalist convictions.

In 1937, Steinberg wrote a text with the title 'Where Are The Jews to Go? The Immigration Problem. Empty Spaces in the British Empire. The New Territorialism'.³⁰⁰ The following year, he again used the "empty spaces"-formula when describing the Freeland League as a "movement which aims at the cooperative colonisation of Jewish masses from Central and Eastern Europe in one of the empty spaces of the world."³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 9, 14, 109.

²⁹⁶ Journalist William Zuckerman described Lord Winterton's mentioning of Kenya at the Evian Conference. Zuckerman also mentioned a plan to grant the former German colonies to Jews, the Labour party's organ *London News-Letter* suggestion of the Negev desert, as well as a plan proposed by the Rumanian-Jewish lawyer Menachem Mandel from Czernowitz to create an autonomous Jewish state on the borderlands of Poland, Rumania, and Soviet Ukraine: William Zu[c]kerman, "Territories", draft article attached to letter to Steinberg, [1938], YIVO RG366/479.

²⁹⁷ Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 9.

²⁹⁸ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: the History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), xiv, 48.

²⁹⁹ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 13, 17.

³⁰⁰ Steinberg, 'Where Are the Jews to Go?', YIVO RG255, Box 1. Also reprinted in Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg*, 30-4.

³⁰¹ Steinberg to Mrs. Warr, 16 March 1938, YIVO RG366/479.

When flying over Australia in 1939, on his way to explore the Kimberley district, Steinberg considered the empty lands below him a problem: "The land was neglected; it lacked population." In the absence of people to populate it, the "empty land" was "slumbering".³⁰²

Leaving (colonial) spaces empty was often seen as wasteful in international politics. British Labour politician, journalist and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Norman Angell partly explained his endorsement of the Territorialist schemes by stating how he had for years been arguing that the British dominions should be actively populated. There was enough space in the Empire, while people around the globe were being persecuted: "We cannot continue to sit on that lid without ultimate explosion."³⁰³ Angell continued to support the Freeland League during the war years, endorsing the Kimberley scheme and even suggesting other parts of the commonwealth, such as South Africa, as possible locations in need of a larger white population. In 1944, he mentioned another geopolitical argument in support of the merits of such schemes: the Soviet Union, India and China were all growing too big too fast. Actively increasing population in overseas territories would help to offer counterweight to this development.³⁰⁴

Gabriel Haus reiterated Angell's opinions regarding the British colonial "empty spaces" in a short pamphlet published in London in 1941. Certain parts of the world, Haus argued, especially in Eastern Europe, were too densely populated. This led to unemployment, crisis and war, while other areas remained underdeveloped and empty. A more equal distribution would create a healthier economic situation. Moreover, due to scientific progress, especially in the field of transportation, different parts of the world were becoming more interdependent. A population crisis in one place now more easily led to a crisis in another. This made the solving of such problems in the interest of all countries. Haus also gave a special wartime-inspired twist to his argumentation: Germans, Italians and Japanese might see the British laxness regarding their abundant colonies as

³⁰² Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 16, 22. I disagree with Willy Birkenmaier's assertion that the use of the terms "empty spaces" or "sparsely populated" areas point to the Territorialist critique of the supposed Zionist neglect of the fact that there was an Arab presence in Palestine: Birkenmaier, "Judentum Ohne Rückkehr," 95. Even though the Freelanders were indeed critical of this fact, the reason for their own focus on "empty spaces" should be found in the more general geopolitical trends and dominant discourses that are described here and in Chapter 4.

³⁰³ Draft speech enclosed in letter Freeland League London branch to Norman Angell, 21 August 1939, YIVO RG366/389. Around the same time, Angell favoured increased Jewish immigration into Palestine. The local Arab population could make way for the new influx, as they would easily find other empty spaces in the world. Quoted in Kelemen, *The British Left*, 62.

³⁰⁴ Norman Angell, 'The Future of the Jews', *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 4-5. See also 'Documents that live', *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 16.

decadent. They could use this fact against the British in their propaganda efforts. Also, the Kimberley scheme would be instrumental in fighting off a Japanese invasion.³⁰⁵

Underpopulated areas thus *needed* inhabitants and the Territorialists could provide them. Their plans constituted both a humanitarian solution and an economically sound project, contributing to the host country's internal market.³⁰⁶ However, in contrast to the ITO, the Freeland League realised that it was not enough to convince only politicians of this idea. Popular support was also needed. Steinberg observed that political movements often neglected the masses. This was a mistake, as such support "in a democratic country is more lasting than the consent of its government. [...] In order to ensure the project's inclusion in the general plan of world-reconstruction, it must be backed by the solid weight of public opinion, non-Jewish as well as Jewish". It should be made clear to a wider audience that Australia's future domestic market depended on an increase in population, which would only come about through large-scale immigration to the country.³⁰⁷

Moreover, in a world still dominated by imperial ways of thinking, it was considered dangerous to allow in immigrants from mother countries with potential expansionist ambitions. But, as an Australian newspaper argued in 1940, Jews had no homeland and thus no "foreign allegiance to stand in the way of their becoming loyal Australian citizens". With such arguments Steinberg approached Australian popular opinion.³⁰⁸ Even after he had finally accepted the failure of the Australia scheme, Steinberg still evoked the Australian experiences as proof of the necessity of local goodwill for any future settlement project to succeed.³⁰⁹

Following the logic of the wastefulness of leaving empty spaces empty, the Polish government had explored different (colonial) settlement schemes during the 1920s and 1930s.³¹⁰ In 1928, a Polish-American colonisation syndicate undertook two expeditions to Peru, acquiring a first concession the following year and subsequently making

³⁰⁵ Haus, "Jews and the Post-War World [Pamphlet]," 3-9.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 8. Also: Steinberg, 'Where Are the Jews to Go?', reprinted in Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg*, 30.

³⁰⁷ Editorial, *Freeland* (August 1944): 2-6: 3.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 6.

³⁰⁹ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 8. In the Australian case, it was a white population whose sympathy had to be won. Considering Steinberg's growing awareness of the plight of the Arab population in Palestine, as well as his more general (post-war) postcolonial sensibilities, it is startling that in Australia Aborigines did not play a role for Steinberg: Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 144. See also the discussion of this issue in connection to the Surinam scheme in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

³¹⁰ Tara Zahra, "Emigration, Ethnic Cleansing, and East European Colonialisms," paper presented at the European University Institute, 15 May 2014.

preparations to settle 250 Polish families. As we have seen, the 1930s would bring even more Polish attempts to create colonial settlements overseas, most notably in Madagascar, only this time explicitly aimed at Polish Jews. Despite the anti-Semitic overtones of such activities, Herwald saw the Polish endeavours as supporting the Territorialist idea.³¹¹

Around the same time, engineer Georg von Hassel acquired a land concession in Peru for the German syndicate Depico. This land was meant for autonomous Jewish large-scale settlement. In 1930, the German Arbeitsgemeinschaft Agro-Industrie, headed by Manfred Kirschberg and Baron A. von Maltzan, produced an extensive research report about the options for a Jewish settlement in Peru. According to this report, Einstein and his wife were to undertake the PR for the project in the U.S. Clearly, and perhaps not unrealistically, Agro-Industrie was convinced that the Poles would be willing to contribute to a large-scale exodus of Jews from Poland. The plan envisioned the arrival of an incredible amount of 20,000 people per month.³¹²

To make use of empty spaces, ironically, spaces had to be made empty. One way of achieving this aim was by resettling the space's original population. An important individual to think along these lines was Joseph Schechtman. The originally Ukrainian Schechtman was closely involved with Jabotinsky, and became a Revisionist himself in 1915. Between 1937 and 1939, he assisted Jabotinsky during the latter's negotiations with the Polish government regarding the evacuation of 1.5 million Polish Jews to Palestine. After the war, Schechtman briefly headed the Revisionists' policymaking committee. Jabotinsky shared Schechtman's conviction that the only way to solve the Jewish problem was to remove at once as many Jews as possible.³¹³ These ideas would form the basis for Schechtman's 1946 book on population transfers, today still one of the classic works on this topic.³¹⁴

³¹¹ Herwald to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 June 1936, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³¹² 'Organisations-Vorschlag zur U[m]siedlung der notleidenden und vertriebenen Juden auf Gemeinwirtschaftlicher Basis nach einer selbstaendigen lateinamerikanischen Concession von Arbeitsgemeinschaft Agro-Industrie überreicht Dr. Steinberg', [1931], YIVO RG366/586. See also Boehmer to South American Proprietary Ltd, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG366/586. About Steinberg's involvement with Agro-Industrie: Boehmer (Agro-Industrie) to Steinberg, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG366/586; Boehmer to Gemeinderabbiner Emil Bernhard Cohn, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG366/586.

³¹³ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 117-9, 138; Antonio Ferrara, "Eugene Kulisher, Joseph Schechtman and the Historiography of European Forced Migration," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, no. 4 (2011): 726.

³¹⁴ Joseph Schechtman, *European Population Transfers, 1939-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946). For a historical discussion of the concept of "population transfers" both before and after the Second World War, see Matthew Frank, *Expelling the Germans: British Opinion and Post-1945 Population Transfer in Context* (Oxford /New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. chs. 1 and 2; Matthew Frank,

The battle between assimilation and racialised politics was represented by the competition between the restoration of minority rights and the propagation of transfers of populations. Raphael Lemkin, who was to coin the term “genocide” during the Second World War, represented the quest for minority rights protection.³¹⁵ Schechtman, by contrast, advocated large-scale transfers of populations. The reality of both the interwar and post-war years showed Schechtman’s vision to be the victorious one.³¹⁶

As we will see, Schechtman had a very negative opinion about Territorialism. Nonetheless, his ideas did contribute to the context in which both the Zionist and Territorialist focus on concentrated and segregated Jewish settlement could flourish. Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann advocated a transfer of populations to secure the Jewish identity in Palestine,³¹⁷ and the Jewish Agency set up a controversial Population Transfer Committee in 1937.³¹⁸ The partition plan of the Peel Commission in 1937 also implied resettling large groups of people.³¹⁹ For Ben-Gurion, the notion that Palestinian Arabs were “transferred” to other areas may have offered a counterargument to the charge that Zionists were “dispossessing” those Arabs: dispossession was a bad thing, but transfer was not.³²⁰

"Reconstructing the Nation-State: Population Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-8," in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch, Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 27-47.

³¹⁵ For an in-depth analysis of the problematic development and eventual failure of international minority rights protection, mainly focusing on the Jewish case, see Fink, *Defending the Rights*.

³¹⁶ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 24, 116; Ferrara, "Eugene Kulisher, Joseph Schechtman," 730. In 1940, Hannah Arendt signalled how the increasing popularity of such population transfers was not a good development for Jews. After all, they did not have a “homeland” to be transferred to, where they would then form a majority: Hannah Arendt, "The Minority Question" [1940] in: *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), 129; also discussed in Gil Rubin, "From Federalism to Binationalism: Hannah Arendt's Shifting Zionism," *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 3 (2015): 399.

³¹⁷ Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 44-5, 48, 51-2; Shabtai Teveth, *The Evolution of "Transfer" in Zionist Thinking* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Shiloah Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1989), 35, 49.

³¹⁸ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 134; Teveth, *The Evolution*, 44-6. At the same time, the proposed American Jewish Committee-conference in 1945, meant to formulate the “Jewish post-war plans in regard to Migration, Statelessness and the Protection of Rights”, shows a double commitment to both migration and minority rights protection: Steinberg to Proskauer, 23 February 1945, YIVO RG366/73.

³¹⁹ Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 168. According to Teveth, it was largely due to the Peel Commission plan that “transfer” thinking entered the minds of some leading Zionists: Teveth, *The Evolution*, 48-9. This conclusion is unlikely, seeing how common the notion of transfer had already been prior to the Peel Commission’s endeavours.

³²⁰ Teveth, *The Evolution*, 24-6. Despite his ostensibly very idealistic view of Ben-Gurion’s moral political choices, Teveth also acknowledges that Ben-Gurion’s general reservations regarding Arab population transfer were largely informed by pragmatic and strategic considerations: it might damage the Zionists’ reputation and create bad blood in the Arab world. This, in turn, would lead to a dangerous situation for Jewish minorities in those countries. The latter argument was also raised by Brit Shalom co-founder Arthur Ruppin, who eventually reluctantly supported the transfer-suggestion after the Peel-report: Teveth, *The*

Large-scale population transfers did not only belong to the realm of ideas: they actually happened. The most famous example was the exchange of Turks and Greeks in 1922, internationally ratified in the Treaty of Lausanne of the following year.³²¹ Decades thereafter, this project, which involved almost two million people, was still seen as a highly successful example of a modern population movement, ignoring the hardships and financial and cultural dispossessions that affected the people involved.

Different Jewish political denominations subscribed to this positive evaluation of population transfers. Diaspora Nationalist Efraim Katz advocated transfers to achieve homogeneous states. Limiting the rights of Jews to live outside Jewish regions would be an acceptable means to this end.³²² The Freeland League members also regularly showed themselves inspired by these population transfers in recent history. These examples strengthened the Territorialists' conviction that their wished-for approach, involving the movement of large groups of Jews, was indeed possible.³²³ The Greek-Turkish example was repeatedly invoked,³²⁴ with one unidentified commentator concluding that from this exchange the Greek republic had been born. More critical voices saw the Greek case as an unattainable ideal, as it had only been successful because of the lack of choice given to the individuals involved: "It seems that without the driving force of utter need people will not emigrate."³²⁵

Race and Colonialism

If there were still empty spaces left they would be found on colonised lands. In 1943, former Munich-based university professor Oskar Goldberg wrote to the American Territorialist Abraham Kin that, to him, the Freeland League was in fact more a colonial organisation than a Territorialist one.³²⁶ However, the one did not exclude the other:

Evolution, 11, 35, 42, 50. See also Steven E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 11, 18.

³²¹ Gatrell, "Trajectories of Population Displacement," 7.

³²² Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 255, 262-3.

³²³ 'Protocol Meeting of the Political Commission of the Freeland League', 18 May 1943, YIVO RG366/516.

³²⁴ [Freeland League], 'After War. Review for Colonization and Post-war Prosperity' (Freeland League-plans described for English periodical), [1945], YIVO RG366/515; 'Program of Work for the Freeland League in London', YIVO RG682/300.

³²⁵ German text [no title] about the goals of Freeland, [no date], YIVO RG366/519; Henriques to Donaldson, 21 October 1937, YIVO RG366/420. Also other examples were praised. The already mentioned author referred to the Chinese trek in the 1920s to Manchuria, Singapore and the Malaysian archipelago, where local tribes on Malakka, Java, Sumatra and Borneo were bought out and replaced by Chinese colonists. "So wollen wir kolonisieren" [this is how we want to colonise], he wrote: German text [no title] about the goals of Freeland, [no date], YIVO RG366/519.

³²⁶ Oskar Goldberg to Abraham Kin, 7 April 1943, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

Territorialism was colonial. When in October 1937 an Empire Migration and Development Conference was organised in London, the Freelanders welcomed it wholeheartedly.³²⁷

The Freelanders stressed that it would even be in the interest of the responsible governments to settle Jews on their overseas territories.³²⁸ These Jews could form an outpost for the colonial power in question, to forge a stronger connection between the colony and the metropole. In a period when the fear to lose colonies was prominent, such a connection mattered more than ever. As the French Freelanders wrote in 1943, France risked losing its important overseas possessions at the end of the war. A colony of Jews, with no country of their own, would strengthen the French bond with these colonies.³²⁹

Such colonial thinking was not at odds with the geopolitical trends of the time. Nor did it contradict with the more internationalist and humanitarian beliefs that the Territorialists cherished. As Susan Pederson has shown, the League of Nations represented a similar combination of internationalism and colonialism. Moreover, as the 1930s progressed, the League of Nations even increasingly explored colonial exchange-options to appease its “revisionist” members such as Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.³³⁰ Territorialism was thus very much in line with the colonial trends of the interwar period.

Such a colonial worldview was accompanied by racist thinking. As mentioned, the Freelanders relied on the “whiteness” of Jews to promote their schemes. Moreover, the Territorialists’ conception of space was partly guided by their tendency to view colonial territories as “empty”, disregarding native inhabitants.³³¹ If not their supposed “emptiness” was assumed, then it was repeatedly mentioned that there was not yet a “very numerous white population” in the proposed places for the Territorialist settlements.³³² Until well into the twentieth century, “race” was seen as a sound scientific category, especially in studies of settlement options in tropical areas.³³³ The 1920s and ‘30s saw an increased interest in racial studies, and not only for colonial purposes or

³²⁷ Henriques to Donaldson, 21 October 1937, YIVO RG366/420; Steinberg, ‘Where Are the Jews to Go?’, reprinted in: Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg*, 30-4.: 30.

³²⁸ Herwald to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 June 1936, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³²⁹ Freeland League (“Terre Libre”) pamphlet, attached to: R. Feinleib to prof. J. Hadamard (New York), 20 February 1943, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

³³⁰ Pederson also remarks that this renewed interest in colonial geopolitical moves never led to realistic options and severely discredited the League towards the late 1930s: Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 294, 325-6.

³³¹ ‘Letters and the ITO’, *The Fortnightly Review* (1906), CZA A330/153,

³³² ‘New Caledonia from the viewpoint of Jewish colonisation’ (report), [1937], CZA A330/14.

³³³ For an exploration of such scientific developments in Australia see Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health, and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

within anti-Semitic circles. Arthur Ruppin, a German Zionist thinker, sociologist and one of the founders of the binationalist Zionist movement Brit Shalom—with some ties to the Freeland League and therefore of particular interest to this study—saw race as a constitutive element of Jewish nationalism. The “racial value” of the Jews underlay their importance as a national collective. For Ruppin, these racial perimeters did not create a racial hierarchy. Admittedly, Jews stood out too much in Northern Europe to remain there, but in the Near East their racial affinity with the local Arabs made coexistence feasible and desirable.³³⁴

For the Freelanders, racist thinking was less a way of defining the Jewish nation as a national entity equal to other nations than a method of showing the Jews’ racial superiority in a colonial setting. Whichever “colour” they had in their different dwellings in the Diaspora, on non-white lands they would become indisputably white. This is then how the Territorialist proposals were presented to government officials and the outside world. The Jews constituted a “civilised population”, so desperately needed in the British and non-British colonies,³³⁵ and this also applied to the French overseas territories. Count Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, the brains behind the Jewish-dominated pan-Europa movement, was a friend of the Freeland League and, in an outburst of philosemitism and pro-Territorialism in the late 1930s, stressed that the real racial struggle in the world was not between Jews and non-Jews, but between black and white (“de[r] echten Rassengegensatz zwischen Weissen und Schwarzen”). Jewish settlements on black colonial lands were therefore needed.³³⁶ Coudenhove-Kalergi, the son of a Japanese woman and married to the Jewish actress Ida Klausner, may have wanted to convey with these words not so much a racist, but more a racially *conscious* message. His ideal, after all, was a world in which there would be only one mixed “European-Asian-Negroid” type that would be greatly enriched by Jewish blood.³³⁷

³³⁴ Morris-Reich, “Arthur Ruppin,” 2-4, 7, 14, 17, 18. Shabtai Teveth claims that by the mid-1930s, Ruppin had abandoned all hopes of finding such cooperation with the Palestinian Arabs: Teveth, *The Evolution*, 11. Etan Bloom argues that Ruppin founded Brit Shalom first and foremost to add to the humanist face of Zionism and to its reputation as peace seeking. He had meant for the movement to be a study forum for the problems Jews faced with the Arab Palestinians, but he essentially disagreed with the political aspirations and the pacifist binationalism of the “radical wing” of the movement, represented by Weltsch, Kohn, Scholem and Bergmann: Etan Bloom, *Arthur Ruppin and the Production of Pre-Israeli Culture* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), 213-23. For more on Arthur Ruppin and Brit Shalom see Aschheim, *Beyond the Border*, 10-1, 18.

³³⁵ Zangwill to Rothschild, 24 October 1912, CZA A120/69, pp. 18-19.

³³⁶ R.N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, “Judenhass: ‘Jüdische Siedlung in Afrika?’ [excerpt], [1937], YIVO RG366/31; Hans Klein to Leftwich, 15 January 1938, CZA A330/14; Klein to Leftwich, 23 January 1938, CZA A330/14.

³³⁷ Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 69.

Interestingly, some Freelanders raised racial arguments not in support of, but against some of the Territorialist schemes. Their criticism of the idea of establishing settlements in one of the non-western colonial territories was informed by on-going discussions about the (un)suitability of tropical regions for white settlement.³³⁸ Territorialist Hans Klein considered it a crime to send Jews to such faraway primitive places: "They will drop to the level of Coolies and their women will mix with the coloureds!"³³⁹ Together with another Austrian Freelanders, Zoltan Schönberger, Klein propagated the "elimination of all disturbing air projects [Luft-Projekte] such as settlement in unsuitable tropical areas etc."³⁴⁰ Leftwich, although openly involved in most of the negotiations of the 1930s, also had reservations about Jewish settlement in the tropics, and especially in Africa.³⁴¹ During a speech in 1943, he rejected the French schemes, as well as those in Ecuador, Madagascar and Australia: "I would not like Territorialism to become identified with cloud-cuckoo lands."³⁴² Lastly, even Steinberg believed that Africa, "Black Man's country", could not offer a solution for the Jews. It would be hard to avoid the use of native labour, and imperialistic rivalries might endanger the stability of the new settlement.³⁴³ When visiting the Kimberley district in 1939, he took special care to interview white people (and especially women).³⁴⁴ The experiences of the unnamed non-white Australians were not seen as informative for white Jewish settlement.³⁴⁵

Colonially inspired and racist thinking thus formed part of the Territorialist

³³⁸ Alison Bashford, "Nation, Empire, Globe: The Spaces of Population Debate in the Interwar Years," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 1 (2007): 195.

³³⁹ Original: "Zu Kulis [colonial servants or labourers] werden sie herabsinken und ihre Frauen werden sich mit den Farbigen mischen!": Klein to Leftwich, 19 February 1937, CZA A330/14.

³⁴⁰ Original: "Ausschaltung aller störenden Luft-Projekte wie Siedlung in ungeeigneten Tropengebieten etc.": Part of demands Freeland League Vienna (signed Klein and Schönberger) as reaction to plans for French territories, CZA A330/15.

³⁴¹ Two pages of letter Leftwich to Mattuck, 18 February 1937, CZA A330/581; Leftwich to Nathan, 13 October 1936, YIVO RG682/300.

³⁴² Speech Leftwich at rebirth ITO on 14 February 1943 at Royal Hotel, CZA A330/13, p. 8. It is interesting to note that Leftwich would mention Australia in this list of non-white destinations. However, in Australia, towards the end of the nineteenth century, medical specialists were also troubled by the racially degenerative influences that the hostile climate of northern Australia, explicitly marked as non-white, might have on white immigrants: Anderson, *The Cultivation*, 75.

³⁴³ Steinberg to Villa, 23 September 1940, YIVO RG366/359; Update Freeland work in Australia to Freeland League in Poland, 27 January 1939, YIVO RG366/488.

³⁴⁴ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 23.

³⁴⁵ Admittedly, such individuals might have been absent, as the area was indeed almost unpopulated: the Australian north had been notoriously violently rid of its native population during the late nineteenth century, up until the 1920s. Still, there were significant numbers of Aborigines present in the area by 1939: there was even an "Aboriginal Reserve". Despite his anti-imperialist, humanist tendencies, Steinberg did not remark on this bloody history of the Kimberleys, if he was at all aware of it. To him, this was practically virgin land: Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 22-4, 142-4.

outlooks and discourse during the interwar period. At the same time, the colonies themselves were in a period of transition towards more power and independence. Colonial powers feared a “Tide of Color” through an “awakening of race consciousness” amongst the colonised peoples.³⁴⁶ The reality of such scenarios becomes apparent from the local resistance that was co-responsible for the torpedoing of the Madagascar-scheme. As Jennings phrases it: “At a time of growing colonial resentment, refusing the Jews in some circles came to be seen as an act of resistance.”³⁴⁷ The Freelanders, and especially Steinberg, grew increasingly aware of the importance of appealing to decolonising and post-colonial sentiments, as we will see in Chapter 4.

Territorialism and Zionism

To conclude this chapter, we now turn to the relationship between Territorialism and Zionism. The (dis)connections between the two movements proved formative for both during these pre-war years. Generally speaking, the 1920s and 1930s marked some significant shifts in Jewish political thinking. In the U.S., Zionism was on the rise and this development led to what Mendelsohn has termed the tendency to “Zionist fellow-travelling” of non-Zionist political groups. Zionists and non-Zionists increasingly cooperated and thus also influenced each other.³⁴⁸ By contrast, in Eastern Europe, Zionism, like other Jewish political actors, became increasingly marginalised from general political life. Zionists no longer tried to achieve their aims through participation in local politics and integration with other factions, but invested in preparing Jewish settlers (or *halutzim*) for Palestine. Territorialism, for its part, did not abandon its commitment to *Gegenwartsarbeit*: the Jewish reality was in the here and now and not only in some conceptual future in Palestine.³⁴⁹

Despite these differences, Alroey sees a striking similarity developing during the 1930s between the tone and vocabulary of the Zionists and the terminology and arguments used by the Territorialists some decades earlier.³⁵⁰ Some Zionists did indeed believe the Territorialists were doing good work: In addition to Syrkin, the Polish Zionist leader Arjeh Tartakower expressed open support for Territorialist initiatives during the

³⁴⁶ Quoted in Mazower, *Governing the World*, 165.

³⁴⁷ Jennings, “Writing Madagascar,” 208.

³⁴⁸ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 82-3.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 73, 10.

³⁵⁰ Gur Alroey, *Seeking a Homeland: The Jewish Territorial Organization (Ito) and Its Struggle with the Zionist Movement, 1905-1925*, [in Hebrew] (The Ben Gurion University of the Negev, 2011).

late 1930s.³⁵¹ Chaim Weizmann joined the supporting committee for the Freeland League in 1936³⁵² and stated officially that he believed the Zionist movement should also support alternatives to Zionism.³⁵³ He himself had entertained the option of settling German Jews within the French mandates in Syria and Lebanon.³⁵⁴ This open endorsement of Territorialism is remarkable, especially bearing in mind Weizmann's initial critique of the "Ugandists" between 1903 and 1905.³⁵⁵ Admittedly, as we will see, Weizmann's flirtation with Territorialism was to be temporary. Still, his support for the Freeland League serves to problematise the by now accepted image of the Zionist leader as a Palestinian hardliner.³⁵⁶

The most prominent Zionist who maintained close relations with the Territorialist movement was Vladimir Jabotinsky.³⁵⁷ As we have seen, the Revisionist leader had already been involved with the ITO in the days of Zangwill. Some years later, in an emotional letter, he thanked Zangwill for all his support.³⁵⁸ Julius Brutzkus, the brother of one of the central Freeland League figures in Paris before the war, cooperated with Jabotinsky,³⁵⁹ and Steinberg sent him press clippings about his own work in Australia.³⁶⁰ Jabotinsky wrote favourably about the Kimberley project and Steinberg in his posthumously published *The War and The Jew* (1942).³⁶¹ As mentioned earlier, in 1934, Leopold Kessler even imagined Jabotinsky as the new Territorialist leader.

It is indeed not entirely clear that Jabotinsky himself was immovably fixated on Palestine. At one point, he declared to have been pleased to acquire a state like Kentucky for European Jews.³⁶² In his hagiographic biography of Jabotinsky, the anti-Territorialist Schechtman recalled how his old friend had told him in 1938 that in 1915-1916, whilst on

³⁵¹ Arjeh Tartakower to Jewish People's Service (JPS), [1938], YIVO RG366/23.

³⁵² Leftwich to Nathan, 19 October 1936, YIVO RG682/300.

³⁵³ 'Our Press', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 21.

³⁵⁴ Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 202; Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 144.

³⁵⁵ Almog, *Zionism and History*, 266.

³⁵⁶ This image was pioneered by historians such as Avi Shlaim: Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London: Penguin, 2001), 5-10.

³⁵⁷ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 133-4.

³⁵⁸ Around the same time, he tried to convince Zangwill to support the Keren Ha-Yesod (United Israel Appeal). Zangwill declined: Jabotinsky to Israel Zangwill, [1921], CZA A120/219; Jabotinsky to Zangwill, [1921], CZA A120/219, pp. 10-11; Zangwill to Jabotinsky, 10 May 1921, CZA A120/219, pp. 12-13. A few years later, Zangwill wrote to Jabotinsky that he hoped his Zionism was not exclusively Palestinian: "try to wake up [the] Zionists to what Zionism really means. I have at least paved the way.": Zangwill to Jabotinsky, 1 April 1924, CZA A120/219, pp. 4-5.

³⁵⁹ Steinberg, 'Letter from Abroad, Freeland in New York', 2 March 1944, YIVO RG366/38.

³⁶⁰ Steinberg to [?] Rappaport (New Zionist Organisation), 22 January 1940, YIVO RG366/497.

³⁶¹ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The War and the Jew* (New York: The Dial Press, 1942), 250-257.

³⁶² Leftwich, 'Israel Zangwill', [1957], YIVO RG366/932; Leftwich to Lvovitch, 19 January 1937, CZA A330/13.

a plane to South Africa, flying over Uganda, he suddenly had felt doubts about his 1905 vote against the Uganda proposal.³⁶³

Surely, The Freeland League did not want to portray itself as posing competition to Zionism—or any other Jewish national movement for that matter: “We wish them all success in their particular spheres, and many of us cooperate with them in their work.”³⁶⁴ The Austrian Territorialist leader Zoltan Schönberger stressed that “the common Jewish cultural centre is and will remain to be Zion”.³⁶⁵ In 1943, Leftwich too felt that the Palestine option needed to be kept open.³⁶⁶ At the same time, Territorialists could not believe that Zionists would not be able to see that a Territorialist project was necessary: “In the old days such a [Territorialist] scheme might have aroused the hostility of the Zionists, but even the most fanatical of them must see now that Palestine is not the solution of the Jewish problem.”³⁶⁷

Both in internal Territorialist correspondence and in official documents meant for propaganda purposes it was repeatedly stressed that Territorialism and Jewish statehood in Palestine were not incompatible. On the contrary, creating other Jewish centres of settlement would only strengthen Palestine’s position. The two locations together would form an “undividable unity” [“untrennbare Einh[ei]t”], with Palestine as the magnet and symbol, and the Territorialist alternative as a well-planned and secure place for the majority of Jews to emigrate to.³⁶⁸ After all, as one Territorialist wrote in 1936, “[n]o Nationalist Jew can tell me that the need for a Jewish Home-land [meaning also elsewhere] has been minimised by the excellent work we have done in Palestine”.³⁶⁹

There was even the incidental voice arguing that the Territorialist settlement and the Palestine project could aid each other in practical ways. One Territorialist suggested contacting Zionist specialists for advice (although not the Zionist political leadership, as

³⁶³ Joseph Schechtman, *Rebel and Statesman. The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story: The Early Years* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Inc., 1956), 89.

³⁶⁴ Leftwich, ‘Speech at Meeting of Freeland League, Royal Hotel, London. February 1st 1937’, CZA A330/13; ‘The urgent need of Jewry’, Freeland League propaganda leaflet, [no date], CZA A330/14.

³⁶⁵ Original: “[d]as gesamt-jüdische kulturelle Zentrum ist und bleibt Zion”: Schönberger to Leftwich, 16 October 1936, CZA A330/14.

³⁶⁶ Speech Leftwich at rebirth ITO on 14 February 1943 at Royal Hotel, CZA A330/13, pp. 11-12.

³⁶⁷ A. Leveen to Leftwich, 28 November 1935, CZA A330/14.

³⁶⁸ [Emcol]-Document ‘Plan oder nicht Plan’, [1937], YIVO RG366/46; EMCOL, ‘Emigration and Colonisation’, for the Evian Conference 1938, YIVO RG366/485; Memorandum Jewcol (Daniel Wolf), 3 January 1939, YIVO RG366/490.

³⁶⁹ [Herwald?] draft for: Herwald to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 June 1936, (eventually published in the *Jewish Chronicle* (28 June 1936), YIVO RG255, Box 2.

this constituted a “talking fraternity who are a very difficult species”).³⁷⁰ In 1935, the earlier mentioned agricultural specialist Walther Boehmer offered to present before the Jewish Colonisation Association and the Zionists his idea that the Territorialist colony could produce raw materials for Palestine.³⁷¹ Supportive outsiders, like Norman Angell, reiterated such arguments. According to Angell, who “for many years [had been] and [...] remain[ed], a Zionist”, Territorialism would nonetheless “smoothe the very difficult path of Zionist ideals”. He believed that “there must be many stepping-stones or half-way houses” on the way to Palestine. He mentioned the American Jews, who would not yet leave the U.S. for Palestine, but in due course might consider to do so.³⁷²

Territorialists themselves did not see their movement as merely a stepping stone, but rather believed that Territorialism would function as a second pillar in a dual Jewish national narrative. This vision also made the movement more acceptable and “saleable” to potential adherents who felt the need to support Palestine simultaneously.³⁷³ This approach attests to an increasing Territorialist awareness of the growing precariousness of its position vis-à-vis Zionism. During an exploratory meeting between both Territorialists and non-Territorialists in South Africa in 1943, meant to discuss the option of Jewish mass settlement in that country, a discussion evolved about whether such a Territorialist project would not be a “stab in the back” of Zionism. Opinions differed, but what was clear was that nothing should hinder the Palestine work.³⁷⁴

Despite this official accommodating stance towards Zionism on the part of the Territorialists, and even despite the occasional internal voice arguing to place Territorialism under Zionist leadership,³⁷⁵ especially Steinberg’s position regarding Palestine remained openly critical: “Just now before our eyes are disclosed the disastrous results of Zionist diplomacy which contented itself with vague, and equivocal, formulae and twenty years after the Balfour Declaration dusted documents must be taken from the shelves to find out the real meaning of the treaties.”³⁷⁶ And: “All my life I have fought

³⁷⁰ Cyril Henriques to H.B. Donaldson (Organising Secretary Empire Migration and Development Conference), 21 October 1937, YIVO RG366/420.

³⁷¹ Walther Boehmer to Gemeinderabbiner Emil Bernhard Cohn, 9 August 1935, YIVO RG366/586.

³⁷² Draft speech enclosed in letter Freeland League London branch to Norman Angell, 21 August 1939, YIVO RG366/389; published in *Freeland* in 1945 as: Norman Angell, ‘Your Future...Our Future’, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 3-4.

³⁷³ P.J. Hartog to Seligman, 23 October 1938, YIVO RG366/468.

³⁷⁴ ‘Report of meeting held on 22nd August, 1943, to discuss Dr. I.N. Steinberg’s suggestion that steps be taken to create facilities for a mass colonization of Jews in South Africa’, 1943, YIVO RG366/587.

³⁷⁵ Gabriel Haus to Abraham Kin, 9 October 1940, YIVO RG554, Box 1.

³⁷⁶ Isaac Steinberg to Robert Waley Cohen, 5 March 1939, YIVO RG366/405.

against the idea of a Jewish State even in Palestine”.³⁷⁷ This fight against Jewish statehood went so far that, even though for diplomatic reasons he did not openly oppose the Palestine project, occasionally Steinberg did express the hope that the Freeland League work would somehow undermine the policy of the political Zionists.

Steinberg did not oppose Zionist *ideology*, but its reality. His objections to Jewish *statehood* did have ideological roots, however, and had much to do with the problematic relationship he discerned between the Zionists and Arabs in Palestine.³⁷⁸ For many Territorialists, the “Arab Question” was one of the decisive arguments in favour of their own ideals. By offering a second place of refuge for Jewish refugees and immigrants, the pressure on Palestine would be reduced, the Arabs would feel less threatened, and the British more inclined to aid the Zionist cause.³⁷⁹ Zuckerman observed a growing recognition in Europe of the need for another territorial solution to the Jewish problem. This realisation was the result of both the Zionist “earlier success and recent failure”, as shown by the “ever-growing Arab terror”.³⁸⁰

The at times hostile feelings of the Freelanders regarding the Zionists were mutual. Shortly after the foundation of the Freeland League in the mid 1930s, anti-Territorialist opinions were yet again expressed in the international press.³⁸¹ Australian Zionists were opposed to the Kimberley scheme, and their efforts contributed to the plan’s failure.³⁸² Despite his earlier open support for the Freeland League, Chaim Weizmann also published outspoken critiques of the different non-Palestinian outlets that the Territorialists explored. He especially condemned the British Guiana option, which prompted Steinberg to write a polemical article for the *Jewish Chronicle*.³⁸³ It has even been suggested that Weizmann accepted the provisions of the 1937 Peel-partition plan for Palestine partly to prevent the Freeland-Moutet scheme for the French overseas territories.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁷ Steinberg to Charles Seligman, 30 November 1938, YIVO RG366/468.

³⁷⁸ W. Zuckerman, ‘Dr. I.N. Steinberg’, *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5-6: 6; Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 116.

³⁷⁹ A.o.: ‘The place of Freeland with Jewish Life’, address to the Second Freeland Conference, NYC, October 1948, YIVO RG682/566.

³⁸⁰ William Zu[c]kerman, ‘Territories’, draft article attached to letter to Steinberg, [1938], YIVO RG366/479.

³⁸¹ Klein to Leftwich, [1937], CZA A330/14; Klein and Schönberger to Leftwich, 8 February 1937, CZA A330/86.

³⁸² Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 183-4; Gettler, *An Unpromised Land*, 97-104.

³⁸³ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 187.

³⁸⁴ Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 212.

Despite the possible Territorialist leanings on the part of Jabotinsky, in a 1924 letter to a friend, he described Zangwill as “a man who could not fit in with us. To him, the fate of the [Zionist] movement is always contingent upon the attitude of today’s parish constable”.³⁸⁵ Notwithstanding Jabotinsky’s mildly positive attitude towards Steinberg and his Australia scheme, he mostly included the project in his analysis “not only because of the honesty and devotion of its promoters, but also and more especially because the same sort of objections apply not only to Australia but to all ‘territorialist’ schemes outside Palestine”.³⁸⁶ When the Territorialist periodical *Freeland* brought Jabotinsky’s appreciative words back to memory in 1963, it conveniently left out these final, less than positive conclusions.³⁸⁷

Whereas Weizmann and Jabotinsky opposed particular settlement plans rather than the Territorialist movement as such, other Zionists did attack the Freeland League face-on: the unknown author of an article published during the war years reminded the Freelanders that Territorialism had been suspended with good reasons. The Territorialist organisation had been wound up to give Zionism the space that it deserved, “and in order not to play into the hands of anti-Zionist political factors who would have been pleased to exploit territorialism at that moment. Perhaps the few surviving territorialists will take the hint.”³⁸⁸

Another anti-Territorialist publication saw the light of day in the form of none other than Joseph Schechtman’s *Territorialistische Illusionen*. In this booklet, Schechtman spoke of a recent “curious rebirth [“eigenartige ‘Wiedergeburt’”] of Territorialism. He dismissed the Freeland League as a harmless collection of intellectual study groups rather than as a real movement.³⁸⁹ As we have seen, Schechtman’s advocacy of population transfers matched well with Territorialism’s own ambitions. Nonetheless, his personal

³⁸⁵ Joseph Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet. The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story: The Last Years* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Inc., 1961), 33, 601, n.21. During the years 1937-1939, Jabotinsky himself approached the “parish constables” by undertaking negotiations with the Polish government regarding the evacuation of Polish Jews: Teveth, *The Evolution*, 7. It should be noted that during the late 1930s Jabotinsky was not the only Zionist undertaking negotiations with right-wing Polish and Romanian leaders: Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 111.

³⁸⁶ Jabotinsky, *The War and the Jew*, 257.

³⁸⁷ ‘Jabotinsky On Dr. Steinberg’, *Freeland* 16, no. 2 (Oct. 1963): 7. Neither did Steinberg himself mention the criticism when he described the passage in 1948: Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 108.

³⁸⁸ Article in unknown source, ‘Artificial Respiration’, [1943], YIVO RG255, Box 1.

³⁸⁹ Joseph Schechtman, *Territorialistische Illusionen* (Helsinki, 1939), 8.

Jewish politics, aimed at Jewish statehood, did not allow him to consider any other destination than Palestine.³⁹⁰

Schechtman admitted that those Jews and non-Jews proposing other locations were not anti-Semites or even anti-Zionists: they were simply deluded. They toyed with abstract Territorialist mirages [“Trugbilder”], “Fatamorgana[s]”,³⁹¹ and their “illusions” only worked as long as their plans remained in the realm of thought and fantasy. As soon as such schemes had to face the test of reality they evaporated. The failure of the recent Evian Conference had shown the lack of viability of any Jewish concentrated colonisation scheme other than Palestine.³⁹²

But, Schechtman continued, the popular vision of empty spaces, combined with the Jewish emigration issues, made for such illusory ideas to be reborn time and again.³⁹³ The larger part of the text therefore provided an overview of the different settlement options of preceding years, amongst which were also non-Territorialist projects such as Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Cuba and Birobidzhan.³⁹⁴ Schechtman’s main aim then was to convince his readers that not only were none of these schemes feasible, but also that their underlying premise of Palestine’s limitations was false: Palestine was capable of absorbing large numbers of Jews in a short period of time. To make this happen, Schechtman called for the execution of the New Zionist Organisation’s³⁹⁵ plan for speedy large-scale Jewish immigration into Palestine.³⁹⁶ All other projects, however well-meant and harmless—the Jewish emigration problem was large enough and besides, Palestine did not have any real competition anyway—were unwanted diversions of the attention that should be devoted to the creation of the Jewish state. Allowing them to be explored would not only be a waste of time, but it would diminish the exclusively Jewish claim on Palestine. The Jewish people could only labour for one colonisation project at a time, and that one was Palestine. This choice for location was uncontested: no other place in the world was available and no other place instilled in city-bred people such inspiration and idealism to work the land—their *own* land.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁰ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 123-4.

³⁹¹ Schechtman, *Territorialistische Illusionen*, 50, 4, 8, 52.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 51, 9.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-43.

³⁹⁵ New Zionist Organisation (NZO): Jabotinsky’s movement, of which Schechtman was a central member.

³⁹⁶ Schechtman, *Territorialistische Illusionen*, 43, 47-8.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8, 48, 5, 6-7, 46.

In essence, Schechtman seemed to share some of the Territorialists' assertions: the era of dispersed immigration had come to an end and there was only a future for concentrated agricultural settlement or colonisation.³⁹⁸ In contrast to the Territorialists, he believed that concentrated settlements called for a colonisation regime ["Kolonisationsregime"], which would only work within the context of a Jewish state.³⁹⁹ Indeed, he confirmed, a speedy solution for the Jewish refugees was necessary, but no other plan would offer it. The Greek-Turkish population exchange, Schechtman then went on to argue, showed that it would be possible to bring half a million Jews into Palestine within one year. What should change were the immigration policies of the anti-Zionist mandate government.⁴⁰⁰

The Territorialists themselves were aware of the anti-Territorialist attitudes of some of the Zionists, who often treated the Freelanders as "traitors".⁴⁰¹ Internal correspondence suggests a constant dreading of Zionist attacks.⁴⁰² During a Freeland meeting in 1936, the suspicion was raised that the Zionists were pretending to participate in fundraising for non-Palestinian initiatives while in reality intending to use that money for their own purposes. They would then "discredit the whole idea of other lands, by insisting that they had looked for them, but that there were none to be found."⁴⁰³

Despite the Zionist opposition, the Freelanders did not back down. Neither the dramatic changes that the war years and the Shoah were to bring about in Jewish political and cultural life, nor the post-war developments leading up to the proclamation of the State of Israel in May 1948 were to spell the immediate end for Territorialism. The new circumstances and the changing geopolitical situation and discourse—ironically partly shaped by figures like Schechtman—did lead to changes in outlook, behaviour and tactics on the part of the Freeland League. The organisation, now under the undisputed leadership of Steinberg, was to face these challenges head-on.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 7, 49.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 49-50.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 41, 43.

⁴⁰¹ [Unknown author], handwritten 'Plan of approaching Zionists with our proposed solution (Palestine plus Tanganyika)', 8 September 1948, YIVO RG366/589.

⁴⁰² A.o.: Hans Klein to Ligue Territorialiste Juive, Paris, 24 February 1937, YIVO RG366/31; Siegel to her parents, [no date], YIVO RG366/337; Feliks Futmann to Steinberg, 13 October 1949, YIVO RG366/590.

⁴⁰³ Black book with the minutes of the British department of the Freeland League, 1935-6: meeting 14 January 1936, CZA A330/14.

Conclusion

The separation process that had started between Zionism and Territorialism during the ITO-days, and which was only interrupted by a short period of rapprochement following the Balfour Declaration, continued with the establishment of the Freeland League. Whereas it was still a Western-led organisation, Central and Eastern European Territorialists became increasingly influential within the movement. These individuals and the geographical and political contexts in which they lived contributed to Territorialism's growing embeddedness within the crowded, cacophonous scene of Jewish politics. No longer could the Territorialist organisation be seen as an obscure version of Zionism; alongside amongst others Bundists, Diaspora Nationalists and Folkists it now strove for an amelioration of Jewish life in the Diaspora, a life threatened by rising anti-Semitism. This development manifested itself for instance in a growing investment in Yiddishist matters and in Jewish tradition. This chapter has situated the Freeland League, a non-Zionist movement with territorial ambitions, amongst the collection of Jewish political bodies of the 1930s. By doing so, I have problematised the existing image of a predominantly non-territorial pre-war Jewish political imagination.

This chapter has also demonstrated how Territorialists during the 1930s sought to define themselves not as hostile towards, but as critical of Zionism, partly through their critique of the Zionist dealings with the Arab population of Palestine. The "Arab Question" also ties into the larger geopolitical trends and discussions that were influential for the Freeland League during this period, while Territorialist thought and action also reflected these same trends and discourses. Most notably, the reliance on an imperial worldview, so central during the ITO-period, was still present during the early phase of this second wave of Territorialism. The Freelanders also did not shy away from racist and racialist language, although this was now exclusively used to describe the indigenous peoples in the colonial areas under discussion—if these were mentioned at all—and no longer in reference to Jews. "Empty spaces" and "agro-industry" became central notions in the visions for a Territorialist scheme, while such concepts existed in larger contemporary discussions about population politics as well. As we will see in the next chapter, the post-1945 reality was to show change, but also continuity in these trends and discussions, both within the Freeland League and in the larger world of geopolitics.

Chapter 4: The Freeland League in the Post-War Period

What is the Jewish problem? It is the permanent need for a change of air.¹

Introduction

In 1944, Leila Nash Danciger, the managing editor of the Freeland League's recently founded English language periodical *Freeland*, described the rationale for the movement's continued existence:

We can be reasonably assured, that though [after the war] there will be much diplomatic double talk on one hand and though there will be a sincere desire to help us on the other [...] the good, the bad and the indifferent will cancel each other, and the result will be [...] that we must find the answer to our problem ourselves. Having found it, we can then go to those who may help and work with us, and prepare our postwar, post-wandering plan for the future.²

After the war, most Jewish political and cultural networks were "completely laid waste".³ Many of the continental European Territorialists had perished during the Shoah.⁴ What remained of the Freeland League in Europe had to be rebuilt from scratch. The small remnant of Polish Territorialism tried to attach itself to other Jewish parties. In 1947, the Jewish People's Party, a continuation of the pre-war Folkist Party in Poland, became affiliated with the Freeland League, as did the Jewish Democratic Party of Poland, even after its official disbandment in 1946. However, the conviction persisted that the Freeland League should remain a non-party organisation so as not to antagonise non-Jewish politicians and other Jewish political denominations.⁵

The British Territorialists had been spared deadly casualties. During the war years,

¹ 'Freeland Takes the Stand', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 5-7, 15.

² Leila Nash Danciger's letter to the reader in 'Letters to the Editor', *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 24.

³ 'From Our Point Of View: Let's Talk Openly', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 3, 16: 3.

⁴ For a list of those Freeland League members who died during the Shoah see: *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 2. For the names of the murdered Polish Freelanders see: L. Lapin, 'Freeland in Poland', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 8, 16: 8.

⁵ Minutes Freeland Youth Organisation, 10 July 1947, YIVO RG366/65; 'Excerpts from letters from Europe', letter from Łódź, 27 April 1947, YIVO RG366/143; Goodman to Boris Raptshinsky, 15 April 1947, YIVO RG366/107; 'Facts of Freeland League', 1 October 1947, YIVO RG366/515; *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Stronnictwa Demokratycznego w Łodzi*, nr. 14, 10 July 1947, YIVO RG682/378.

the organisation continued its activities mainly through the endeavours of T.B. Herwald.⁶ In 1944, Herwald wrote to politician David Gammans how he had found support with several individuals in the Colonial Office during the late 1930s, but that the time then had not been ripe for a Territorial plan to materialise. This situation had changed now that the former Italian territories in Cyrenaica and Libya, already explored in the ITO-days, had become available.⁷

In January 1943, Herwald even wrote to Winston Churchill, reminding him of a statement the politician had made back in 1905, while attending an ITO meeting in Manchester. On that occasion, Churchill had said that

a million pounds divided between many hands is of no value compared with it being in the hands of one man. So it is that a people scattered all over the world have little value, but a million Jewish settled in a territory in East Africa under the British flag would command respect.⁸

Herwald then reminisced about a meeting that had taken place between the two men the following year, on 5 January 1906. Herwald had then accurately predicted Churchill's election and Prime Minister Balfour's defeat:

My prophesy came true and now after 37 years I venture to make another concerning yourself and the late Lord Balfour. It is "that the Balfour declaration of 1917 which should have been a solution of the Jewish problem is defeated and that you will again be the victor, this time in solving the World's problems, including the Jewish problem [by supporting the Freeland League.]"⁹

Israel Zangwill's widow, Edith, wrote an encouraging letter to Herwald in 1943, expressing her belief that his activities "to resuscitate the ITO" could prove successful.¹⁰ Leftwich had distanced himself from the movement, but nonetheless also encouraged

⁶ Confirmations of receipt of letters to Col Oliver Stanley (Colonial Office), 11 February 1943; Clement Attlee, 1 February 1943; Anthony Eden, 2 February 1943; Cardinal Hinsley, 29 January 1943, all in YIVO RG255, Box 2; Secretary Viscount Cranborne (Colonial office) to Herwald, 11 June 1942, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁷ Herwald to David Gammans, 7 December 1944, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁸ Herwald to W. Churchill, 11 January 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Edith Zangwill to Herwald, 8 January 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

Herwald to continue the Freeland work. He suggested several Polish Territorialists, as well as the German Max Apt as (potential) collaborators.¹¹ Some other central Anglo-Jewish figures who had actively supported the Freeland League before the war continued to do so after 1945: Robert Waley-Cohen and Charles Sebag-Montefiore were now members of the Freeland League advisory council.¹²

Despite these on-going activities in the U.K., most Freeland League activity moved to New York City already during the early war years.¹³ In 1945, British Freelanders Jack Philips wrote to *Freeland*:

It is not without a little heart-ache that we have watched the centre of gravity of our movement shift to America; but this is progress, this is development, and it is appropriate that it should find its setting today within the great Jewish community of the United States. To you, now, all Jewish eyes must turn, as the eyes of all this stricken world are turned towards your great country, virile, throbbing, benevolent bastion of liberty and freedom.¹⁴

The Freeland League actively reinvented itself as an American Jewish organisation: the devastations wrought amongst European Jewry meant that now all the work landed on the shoulders of American Jews.¹⁵ Therefore, the first edition of *Freeland* in the summer of 1944 did not mention the Freeland League work in Europe of the preceding years at all. On the contrary, it explicitly mentioned Steinberg's Australia work in 1943 as the first public Freeland activity.¹⁶ The movement's main aim was now to reach American Jewish youth and public opinion, as Territorialism needed the "Jewish masses". To this end, on 27 February 1944, the newly established Freeland Youth Group organised a public rally in Steinway Hall in New York City, which was attended by some 200 people.¹⁷ It also ran an advertisement in the *New York Post* of 8 February 1946, which generated diverse

¹¹ Leftwich to Herwald, 20 January 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

¹² 'Report From Europe', *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 2, 16: 2.

¹³ M. Mendelsberg to J.A. Cherniack on paper with letterhead: "Freiland, Jewish Territorialist League, 41 Union Square", 22 February 1943, YIVO RG264, Box 1.

¹⁴ 'Letter from London', *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 4.

¹⁵ 'From Our Point Of View: Let's Talk Openly', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 3, 16: 3.

¹⁶ 'The Freeland League in Action', *Freeland* (August 1944): 8-9:8.

¹⁷ Ibid.; *Freeland* (August 1944): 1; Editorial, *Freeland* (August 1944): 2-6:3. *Freeland* repeatedly reported Freeland Youth League activities. See, for instance: 'Activities [...] [i]n the Freeland Youth League', *Freeland* 1, n. 2 (February 1945): 24.

responses.¹⁸ The First Freeland Conference in America was held in New York between 22 and 24 November 1946.¹⁹ Henceforth, the Freeland tasks were formulated as follows:

We aim...

To create a Jewish Settlement in some unoccupied area for all those who seek a new home...

To do this by means of planned large scale colonization...

To negotiate with the various peoples and governments concerned...

To direct the activities necessary for the realization of this idea...

To acquaint Americans with the possibilities for Jewish settlements in sparsely populated areas of the World...

To organize the Jewish youth of this country for the great task of rehabilitation that lies ahead.²⁰

Territorialism's focus on the survival of Judaism and Jewish culture had increased during the war years. Anticipating post-war Jewish challenges, *Freeland* perceived of the movement's main task as to deal with "the most pertinent problem of our time—specifically the problem of the postwar rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Jewish people". The American Jewish community would stand at the forefront of the efforts to create "a settlement [...] where healthy and free Jewish life can develop undisturbed".²¹ This settlement would offer a "homogeneous environment" in which Jewish culture could exist freely. For the first time, the language issue that Steinberg had earlier evaded was now explicitly addressed: in the bilingual Jewish colony both Yiddish and the local language would be spoken.²²

It was mainly Steinberg's daughter Ada (Hadassah, 1917-1956) who, as its main editor, provided much of the material for *Freeland* and who laboured on behalf of the Territorialist movement in a wide array of forums. As we will see, her presence within the post-war Freeland League would become one of the driving forces for the movement's

¹⁸ 'Letters', *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 17.

¹⁹ 'Freeland Notes', *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 2; *Ershte Frayland-Konferentz in Amerike. Afgehaltn in New York Dem 23tn Un 24tn November 1946*, (New York 1947).

²⁰ Inside cover text, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945). The wish to acquaint the American Jewish public with its work remained the explicit opening of *Freeland* until the 1970s.

²¹ *Freeland* (August 1944): 1; Editorial, *Freeland* (August 1944): 2-6:3; Steinberg, 'The Three Roads', *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 1-3: 1.

²² Saul Goodman, 'Territorialism, Autonomy, Nationhood', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 9-10: 10.

activities and ideological direction.²³ Already in early 1941, Ada wrote to the Canadian Territorialist J.A. Cherniack:

We have been in New York, not so much on vacation as on “business”. And by business I mean Freeland. I spent almost three weeks there and I am quite pleased with the results. Apart from interesting a group of rich and influential Jews in the project, “our own” friends have revived our work in New York and we have had several meetings. Much, of course, depends on the developments in Australia [where Steinberg was working on behalf of the Kimberley scheme] but I think we have reasons to be optimistic. At least one glimmer of light on the dark skies of Jewish reality...²⁴

Ada Steinberg—Ada Siegel after her marriage in 1940—assisted her father’s Freeland League activities from 1937 onwards. She also accompanied him to the Evian Conference in 1938. During Isaac’s sojourns in Australia between 1939 and 1943, the young Ada was practically in charge of the organisation.²⁵ Following her studies at the London School of Economics,²⁶ she commenced her professional career during the war years, first in London, where she worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Following her move to Toronto, she was employed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). After relocating to New York City in 1943, Ada, a native Russian speaker, acted as a broadcaster on United Nations affairs, focusing on the Soviet Union. She also worked at the Russian Desk of the Office of War Information in Washington, made several TV appearances as a Russia specialist, and was an editor for the Canadian *Magazine Digest*. Between 1944 and 1946, she edited the radical political magazine *This Month*, which she had founded herself. Just a few months before her tragic death from breast cancer in November 1956, Ada still traveled to Mexico on behalf of the Freeland League.²⁷

In 1943, Steinberg arrived to the U.S. and officially assumed the leadership of the Freeland League. Both Ada and her brother Leo, who arrived to the U.S. from London in

²³ A. Bialistoker, ‘Ada Steinberg-Siegel’, *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 6-7; ‘Statement Of The Executive’ *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 1.

²⁴ Ada Siegel to J.A. Cherniack, 9 January 1941, YIVO RG264, Box 1. More correspondence from Ada Siegel and others on Freeland affairs from 1941 can be found in: YIVO RG554, Box 1, folder 7.

²⁵ ‘Ada Siegel To I.N. Steinberg’, *Freeland* 14, no. 2 (Dec. 1961): 3-6: 3-5.

²⁶ A. Bialistoker, ‘Ada Steinberg-Siegel’, *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 6-7.

²⁷ Eulogy Ada Siegel, [1956], YIVO RG682/682; Yiddish type written message, possibly a press release, about Ada, [1956], YIVO RG682/682; A. Bialistoker, ‘Ada Steinberg-Siegel’, *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 6-7.

1945²⁸ (and who was later to become an acclaimed art historian) became important advocates for the Territorialist cause during the years thereafter. Another central figure in the post-war Freeland League was Lesser Fruchtbaum (1886-1977), a supporter of Yiddishist causes, and affiliated with YIVO, the Congress for Jewish Culture, as well as the Sholem Aleykhem Folk Institute.²⁹ Fruchtbaum's involvement with the Freeland League began in 1946, when the movement commenced its negotiations on behalf of the Surinam project, to which we will return shortly.³⁰

The organisation was officially reinstated on 27 April 1946 in New York City. Steinberg convened its first post-war meeting on 18 May of that year.³¹ The revived Freeland League managed to establish several branches in some of the larger American cities (in addition to New York, there were representatives in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia), in Canada (Montreal), the U.K. (London), France (Paris), Rumania (Jassy), Poland (Warsaw, Łódź, Wrocław, and Szczecin), South Africa (Johannesburg), Australia (Melbourne), Austria (Vienna and several of the DP camps) and Germany (several DP camps).³² The Łódź branch alone had gathered over 400 members by early 1948.³³ In 1946, Steinberg stated that there were a few thousand Territorialists around the globe.³⁴

Steinberg made this statement in 1946 before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine in Washington D.C. "To tell you the truth," he declared, "we [...] are not very interested in the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, because we don't believe that the world as it is developing today is very much in need of a new State." What the Freeland League did believe in was to offer a constructive solution to the problem of Jewish homelessness.³⁵ In his testimony, Steinberg reiterated the four conditions with which a future Territorialist settlement had to comply: the location had to be large enough, offer a reasonable climate, it should be sparsely populated, and the creation of

²⁸ A. Bialistoker, 'Ada Steinberg-Siegel', *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 6-7.

²⁹ Advertisement (in Yiddish) by president N. Turak and treasurer Keyle Minkin of the Freeland League on the occasion of Fruchtbaum's death in January 1977, YIVO RG682/354.

³⁰ Fruchtbaum, 'Freeland In Action', *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 2-3.

³¹ Steinberg to T.B. Herwald and Mrs. Herwald, [1946], YIVO RG255, Box 1.

³² 'On New Soil, Under New Skies', Freeland League publication, [1948], YIVO RG682/600; 'South African Freeland Organized', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 2.

³³ 'Freeland League In Europe Reports: Poland', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 3, 7.

³⁴ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 19.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

the settlement should happen not on a philanthropic, but on a business basis.³⁶ To this end, several financing schemes were developed.³⁷ Steinberg preferred that a democratic host country would grant the territory; as for the exact geographical location: it could be anywhere. He even did not exclude non-Jews from becoming part of the settlement (“[w]e are not going to establish a ghetto”), but also stressed the importance of creating a Jewish “family colonisation”, which obviously made the inclusion of such non-Jewish elements problematic.³⁸

The Freeland League had many ambitions, but not a lot of concrete proposals. Unlike the ITO, it had been unable before the war to conduct in-depth investigations of proposed areas. Steinberg devoted most of his four years in Australia to propaganda and lobbying work, and not to actual practical research. Therefore, when one of the Anglo-American Committee members asked Steinberg if he could give an estimate of the costs of a settlement, the Freeland League leader had to admit that he could not. The same interviewer then asked whether the land was to be owned by a body of representatives and then rented to the settlers. Steinberg answered in the affirmative without adding any more practical information.³⁹

The Freeland League realised that it needed to achieve some tangible results and it started to thoroughly investigate its options. In 1947, some of the former Italian territories in Libya, Cyrenaica and Eritrea were mentioned as potential Territorialist destinations. Geopolitical considerations determined the chances of success: these projects would appeal to the strategic meaning of the Mediterranean for the United Nations. As American president Truman was already engaged with the Zionists, he might also be interested in cooperating with the Territorialists.⁴⁰ Moreover, Herwald, in his memorandum to the Anglo-American Committee, mentioned as the realistic options of that moment, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania (Libya), British Honduras, and French, British and

³⁶ Freeland League Poster ‘We demand a Free Land for Homeless Jews. What we testified before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry’, text taken from the *New York Post* (8 February 1946), YIVO RG682/600.

³⁷ John Gorski, ‘Finance Bank For Surinam’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 7-8.

³⁸ ‘Washington Testimony’, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 3, 4, 12-13; *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 19. Rovner deems Steinberg’s preference for this “family colonisation” a sign of sentimentality on the part of the Territorialist leader, “blurred” with his political vision. I contend with this dismissive typification, as this family ideal was very much in line with the rest of Steinberg’s political idealism, and thus did not constitute an aberration: Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 201.

³⁹ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 18.

⁴⁰ Jacob Rosenheim to Steinberg, 16 April 1947, with letter Dr. Kirschberg to Rosenheim 14 March 1947, YIVO RG366/1.

Dutch Guiana.⁴¹ As it turned out, Dutch Guiana was to become the option that came closest to realisation.

*Surinam*⁴²

Dutch Guiana or Surinam was first mentioned as an option for Jewish emigration in December 1938: a Dutch official raised the idea during an Evian subcommittee meeting in London.⁴³ In 1940, Daniel Wolf's JewCol sent out a three-man expedition to explore the region. The findings of this expedition would form the basis of the Freeland League's interest in the region, not in the least because JewCol-member Henri van Leeuwen was now affiliated with Freeland. The following year, Boris Raptchinsky, a Russian-born historian residing in the Netherlands, also pitched the idea of Surinam as a Territorialist destination. Furthermore, in 1944, Herwald contacted a Dutch journalist exiled to the U.K. to discuss the option.⁴⁴

In 1946, the Freeland League officially proposed the colonisation of an unpopulated part of the colony by a group of Eastern European Jewish refugees. The *Staten van Suriname*, the Surinam legislative body, reached an agreement "in principle" on the initial colonisation of a number of 30.000 Jews in June 1947. On 26 November 1947, three days before the Palestine partition vote was scheduled in the United Nations, the Dutch representative to the UN, E.M.J.A. Sassen, announced in the UN General Assembly that an agreement had been reached between the Dutch government and the Freeland League.⁴⁵ In the eyes of Dutch politicians in The Hague this announcement was a premature

⁴¹ Memorandum T.B. Herwald for ITO to Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry for Palestine, 4 February 1946, YIVO RG366/27 and YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁴² The Freeland League endeavours in Suriname formed the topic of both my MA thesis and of a published Ph.D. thesis by Dr. Alexander Heldring: Laura Almagor, "Een Vergeten Alternatief. Het Freeland League Plan Voor Joodse Kolonisatie in Suriname" (MA thesis, Utrecht University, 2007); Alexander Heldring, *Het Saramacca Project. Een Plan Van Joodse Kolonisatie in Suriname* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2011).

⁴³ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 143.

⁴⁴ Herwald to A. Milhado Jr. (of *Vrij Nederland*, the periodical of the Dutch resistance), 20 September 1944; Milhado to Herwald, 21 September 1944; Herwald to M. Sluizer, 29 September 1944, all in YIVO RG255, Box 1; Boris Raptchinsky, *Het Joodsche Wereldprobleem* (Den Haag: H. P. Leopold, 1941). Lesser Fruchtbaum acknowledged Raptchinsky's influence: Lesser Fruchtbaum, 'Surinam', *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 11-12, 15. Throughout the period that Surinam was on the negotiation table, Raptchinsky continuously felt bypassed by the Freeland League in New York, whom he felt did not treat him as its full representative in Dutch political circles: B. Raptchinsky to the Freeland League's executive committee, 30 July 1948, YIVO RG682/361. As late as 1972, Raptchinsky cherished bitter feelings about his past with the Freeland League: B. Raptchinsky to Leybl Kahn, 28 June 1972, YIVO RG682/361. According to his own account, Raptchinsky had been affiliated with figures such as Lenin, Ber Borochov, Ben Zvi and had been one of the founders of Poale Zion. For an overview of Raptchinsky's life and works, see (in Dutch): Jana van Eeten-Koopmans, "Boris Raptchinsky (1887-1983)," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 30, no. 2 (1996).

⁴⁵ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 205.

transgression, but the Freeland League obviously welcomed it with open arms. It even spoke of the historical connection between the Dutch and the Jews, which would now be turned into an “eternal covenant”.⁴⁶ A few months later, on 4 December 1947, the Governor of Surinam, Johannes C. Brons, sent an encouraging letter to the Freeland League, which was again not appreciated in Dutch political circles: like Sassen’s speech, it would give the Territorialists false hope. Indeed, the Freelanders applauded the letter, as “this significant document gives the colonization project of the Freeland League the necessary legal basis and opens great prospects for the Jewish settlement there. The great dream of territorialists is about to become reality.”⁴⁷

In late 1947, a Commission of Experts was sent to Surinam, consisting of several specialists such as a civil engineer and a soil scientist. After having spent months collecting data, the Commission produced an extensive report that deemed the Saramacca district economically promising and scientifically suitable for Jewish colonisation purposes.⁴⁸ Despite this optimism, on 14 August 1948, the *Staten* decided to suspend negotiations with the Freeland League. This decision was officially taken because of the turbulent international developments of the moment: the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948, and the onset of what was soon to be termed the Cold War. The Freeland League was extremely disappointed and continued for some years to plead with the interested parties to move them to reconsider their decision, but to no avail. David Dubinsky’s International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) had contributed a significant sum to the Commission of Experts. The organisation was therefore not amused by the Staten’s dismissal of the scheme. Unfortunately for the proponents of the plan even the powerful workers’ union could not change the politicians’ minds.⁴⁹

The Surinam project demonstrates the different recurrent problems Territorialism had to face. From a political perspective, the host nations’ feared that a Territorialist settlement would create a state within state. This fear had a longer, non-Jewish history: a similar accusation was first uttered against the Huegenots after the 1598 Edict of Nantes, but it was only used in a Jewish context from the Emancipation onwards.⁵⁰ The second practical dilemma, with which both Herzlian Zionism and Territorialism struggled, was

⁴⁶ ‘The Netherlands Delegation at the U.N.’, *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 15.

⁴⁷ ‘Surinam Government Officially Welcomes Jewish Settlement’, *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 3.

⁴⁸ ‘Colonization site selected. Expert Commission in Surinam’, *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (Feb. 1948): 1,7; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 205-210.

⁴⁹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 216.

⁵⁰ Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto; the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 99-100.

the fact that power and money were needed to convince the Great Powers to grant the Jews an autonomous territory. Paradoxically, such financial backing could only be gained after a definite promise was already obtained from one of those powers.⁵¹

Displaced Persons

The Surinam project was presented as a contribution to the solution to the Jewish Displaced Persons (DP)-issue. According to Walter Laqueur, the Territorialist work on behalf of the DPs meant both the movement's most important achievement and the end of its existence: with the liquidation of most of the DP camps, the Freeland League "faded away", ushering in the end of Territorialism.⁵²

Despite the erroneous omission from this account of the Freeland League's pre-war activities, the post-war Freelanders indeed repeatedly used the DP-argument to convince their public of the necessity of its project. Often, this argument was supported by the tragic personal stories of individual DPs.⁵³ Even though Territorialism did not become an exclusively DP-focused endeavour—Steinberg even officially stated that his movement aimed at helping 1,5 million Jews, much more than the 100,000 Jewish DPs in direct need of a home⁵⁴—its connection to the Displaced Persons issue still warrants further elaboration. For Zionism, "refugees in the story of return were secondary to national self-determination".⁵⁵ The Territorialists' primary engagement with refugee issues thus sets them apart from the Zionists.

By 1947, some 650,000 DPs still remained in the various DP-camps.⁵⁶ The conditions in these camps, containing about 250,000 Jews, were often abominable. While these people were awaiting their future unclear departure and emigration, the camps

⁵¹ David Vital, *Zionism, the Formative Years* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1982), 441.

⁵² Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 414. Howard Adelman and Elazar Barkan make an explicit connection between Zionism and Jewish refugees: Howard Adelman and Elazar Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge: Rites and Rights in Minority Repatriation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 156. Many studies focus on the history of the DP-issue and the DP-camps. One 'classic' work is Mark Wyman, *DP: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Philadelphia/London: Balch Institute Press/Associated University Press, 1988). For the history of Jewish DPs see Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁵³ 'Who Will Go To Surinam?', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 19.

⁵⁴ 'Washington Testimony', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 3,4, 12-13: 3.

⁵⁵ Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 156.

⁵⁶ Peter Gatrell, "Trajectories of Population Displacement in the Aftermaths of Two World Wars," in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 7.

became the staging grounds for all sorts of political activities: they became important arenas for competing Jewish political factions, first and foremost the Zionists.

However, not everyone wanted to immigrate to Palestine. Shortly before taking his life in 1942, Freeland-affiliate Stefan Zweig had described a London travel agency, crammed with Jewish refugees whose sole wish it was to emigrate. Their desired destination: anywhere.⁵⁷ In July 1947, Izak Kaczerginski (or: Koczerginski), a DP in the Austrian camp of Steyr, stumbled across a copy of the Freeland League's periodical *Oifn Shvel*, which contained an article about the Surinam scheme. Inspired by the idea, Kaczerginski formed his own Freeland group, soon to be followed by groups in other camps. Mordkhe Schaechter, a young man in his twenties at the time, and the future leader of the Freeland League and the League for Yiddish in New York, headed the Vienna branch. On 22 December 1947, Kaczerginski reported the existence of groups in eight different camps with a total of over 500 members.⁵⁸ Two hundred DPs in Steyr alone had noted down "Surinam" as their wished-for destination on an International Refugee Organisation (IRO) questionnaire. By late 1948, in the German and Austrian camps, some 3000 people had openly expressed their wish to emigrate under a Territorialist scheme, most preferably to Surinam. Perhaps even more people were willing to do the same, without publicly stating this desire. According to Schaechter, in May 1948, the Freeland League was one of the biggest Jewish organisations amongst the DPs in Austria.⁵⁹

On 5 October 1947, the first Freeland conference of DP camps was held in Upper Austria. Its programme stated that the movement held a positive attitude towards Palestine and that it demanded that the United Nations facilitate the immediate admittance of 150,000 Palestine-bound immigrants. Nonetheless, this would leave the remaining 100,000 Jewish DPs without a solution. The 25 representatives from seven camps therefore proposed the establishment of a Jewish settlement in Surinam.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Hans Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan: De Voorgenomen Deportatie van Europese Joden Naar Madagascar* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 1996), 226.

⁵⁸ 'Freeland League In Europe Reports: Austria', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 3, 8; Mordkhe Schaechter, 'The Refugee Freeland League in Austria', *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 8-9.

⁵⁹ Second Freeland Conference, 9-10 October 1948, 'A call to the Jewish People', YIVO RG366/167; 'A Call To The Jewish People!', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 20; Schaechter to Freeland League in the U.S., 4 May 1948, YIVO RG682/860.

⁶⁰ 'Resolutions of the first Freeland conference of the D.P. camps held in Upper Austria on October 5th, 1947', YIVO RG366/114; 'Voice of D.P.'s. Resolutions of the First Freeland Conference of the D.P. Camps held in Upper-Austria on October 5th, 1947. Twenty-five representatives of seven camps took part in the conference', *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 2.

The DP Freelanders continued to openly support the Zionist project. On the occasion of the proclamation of the State of Israel the attendees of the Second Country Conference of the Austrian Refugee Freeland League congratulated the founders of the new state, objected to Arab aggression, and supported their “heroic brothers and sisters” fighting for the Israeli cause.⁶¹ Nevertheless, as we will see, Zionist forces, fearing the loss of valuable potential immigrants to Palestine, actively tried to thwart the Territorialist activities in the DP-camps. Time seemed to become pressing as well. The prospective Territorialist settlers increasingly feared that if they did not opt for Palestine or the United States as soon as possible, they would be left empty-handed if a Territorialist alternative would not materialise after all.⁶²

The Freelanders in the DP-camps unsuccessfully requested official recognition from the American military authorities, for their representatives to travel around freely.⁶³ Without this freedom, they were limited to letter writing: pleas were sent to different officials and the DP Freelanders addressed their American brethren in an open call for support.⁶⁴ Similarly, the Freeland branch in the Austrian camp Arzberger wrote to the famous Yiddishist Max Weinreich.⁶⁵ In May 1948, just a few days before the proclamation of the State of Israel, 166 members of the Freeland group in Vienna, headed by Schaechter, sent a letter to Herbert Lehman, former governor of New York and later senator, and former Director General of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). They asked him to acknowledge the wish of certain DPs not to emigrate to either Palestine or the U.S., but to shape their future within a Territorialist scheme. “Why [...] when a ray of hope does appear for these unfortunate brethren, is it overlooked by everyone?”⁶⁶

Two of these parties overlooking this “ray of hope” were the Dutch and Surinamese governments when they finally suspended negotiations with the Freeland League in August 1948. As we have seen, in the Austrian and German DP-camps the willingness to immigrate to Surinam had been substantial during the years that the plan had been on the table. As soon as Surinam ceased to be a credible option, the Territorialist zeal of the

⁶¹ Translation of ‘Resolutions made at the second Country Conference of the Austrian “Refugee Freeland League”’, 1948, YIVO RG366/529.

⁶² David Siegel to Steinberg, 10 November 1948, YIVO RG366/106; David Siegel to Hugh Keeleyside (Canadian Deputy Minister Mines and Resources), 6 January 1949, YIVO RG366/577.

⁶³ ‘Freeland League In Europe Reports: Austria’, *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 3, 8.

⁶⁴ ‘Ruf zum Amerikaner yidn’, [1948], YIVO RG682/600.

⁶⁵ Letter to Max Weinreich from DP camp Arzberger, 22 June 1948, YIVO RG682/600.

⁶⁶ Freeland group Vienna to Herbert H. Lehman, 4 May 1948, YIVO RG366/527 and YIVO RG682/600.

DPs also waned. This loss of interest corresponds well with Atina Grossmann's observation that the Zionism of many DPs was mainly functional, as they merely sought desperately to escape the DP-camps.⁶⁷ A similar functional attitude thus also applied to refugees with Territorialist convictions.

Nevertheless, the Freelanders themselves believed in Territorialism's continued relevance. In 1954, Ada Siegel pointed out that the recently established Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration (ICEM),⁶⁸ whose work the Territorialists closely followed, named "surplus population" rather than "refugees" as the main issue of the day. These "surplus" people, a significant number of whom were Jewish, were in need of an emigration solution. The Zionist movement was uninterested in these people, as Zionism had reached its end goal with the establishment of the State of Israel. By contrast, the Freeland League faced the task of helping those Jews still in need of a new home.⁶⁹

After Surinam

The founding of the State of Israel in May 1948 may have meant the definitive end for the attainability of the Freeland League's endeavours in Surinam; it did not mean the end of its ambitions: "Israel is no longer a dream, but a reality with limited possibilities. The only realistic historic dream remains – the idea of "Uganda in our time: Freeland."⁷⁰ The New Territorialists were the improved version of the old ITO, which had fallen apart because it had not been in touch with the Jewish masses. The Freeland League would right that

⁶⁷ Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 260-66.

⁶⁸ The Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) was established after a conference initiated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1951 and renamed the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration (ICEM) the following year. Its constitution officially came into force on 30 November 1954. The organisation, although expressly organised outside of the United Nations-framework, was meant to take over the tasks of the UN's International Refugee Organisation (IRO). It initially strove to help European governments resettle their still displaced population and refugees, but eventually also migrants. According to its own account, ICEM managed to resettle over one million individuals during the course of the 1950s and played a similar role in different conflicts around the world during the subsequent decades. In 1980, ICEM changed its name to International Organization for Migration (IOM), still in existence today: "IOM History", <http://www.iom.int/iom-history> (retrieved 11 November 2015); Richard Perruchoud, "From the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration to the International Organization for Migration," *International Journal of Refugee Law* 1, no. 4 (1989): 501-5.

⁶⁹ Ada Siegel, 'Trends In Migration', *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 9-10; Fruchtbaum, 'An Evaluation Of Territorialism', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 5-6. "Surplus people" were already mentioned some years before: 'On New Soil, Under New Skies', Freeland League publication, [1948], YIVO RG682/600.

⁷⁰ Steinberg, 'Uganda. On the anniversary of an idea', *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct 1952): 2-3. See also Steinberg, 'The Jubilee Of An Idea', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 2-3.

wrong.⁷¹ Yiddish writer and Montreal-based Freeland Melech Ravitch, whose pre-war Australian explorations had inspired the Kimberley scheme, now argued for the formulation of a clear Freeland ideology.⁷² Such an ideology needed to be formulated in non-political terms, in order not to break with Territorialist tradition. Steinberg, together with his daughter Ada Siegel, was to be responsible for the substance and main direction of this non-political ideology.

A second Freeland conference was held in New York City on 9 and 10 October 1948, and in the early summer of 1949 the Freeland Executive officially decided to continue its work. In practice this meant that the movement's two periodicals *Oifn Shvel* and *Freeland* would continue to appear. The organisation implemented some budgetary cuts, and between early 1949 and the fall of 1951, no *Freelands* were published. Nonetheless, the Freelanders' publishing efforts actually expanded after 1948, with a Spanish periodical being added to the English and Yiddish ones.⁷³

The Freeland League's programme still aimed at the creation of a "pluralistic", "non-political constructive Jewish colonization". By 1951, according to Steinberg, it had become clearer than ever that Israel alone did not offer a full solution to the Jewish problem.⁷⁴ Jews should not place all their confidence in this one Jewish "Maginot Line".⁷⁵ Moreover, the Jewish problem was not only an issue of immigration. Under the leadership of Steinberg, Territorialism, more than before, aimed at saving Jewish culture and morality. These, the Freelanders had it, were not preserved in the new Jewish state, and, what was more, even threatened with extinction, due to Israel's anti-Yiddish policies and the state's immorally militaristic character.⁷⁶ New Freeland branches were established in Mexico (1948) and Argentina, and a French branch was re-established in 1952. For some years the French Freelanders even published a Yiddish language periodical carrying the same name as the short-lived prewar Polish Territorialist publication *Frayland*.⁷⁷ Shortly before, Freelanders N. Turak and Miriam Mendelsberg optimistically wrote to

⁷¹ Fruchtbaum, '50 Years Of Territorialism', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 7-8.

⁷² 'Freeland League Intensifies and Expands Activities', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 9.

⁷³ Draft letter Freeland League to 'Friends', 24 June 1949, YIVO RG682/326; '1819 Broadway' *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 1-2; Steinberg to Charles Seligman, [1951], YIVO RG682/826; "'Freeland" In Spanish', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 1.

⁷⁴ Steinberg, 'The Function Of Freeland', *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 2-3.

⁷⁵ Steinberg, 'The Way Of Freeland', *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 2-4: 3-4.

⁷⁶ Steinberg, 'The Jubilee Of An Idea', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 2-3; Steinberg, 'For Whom Do I Toil?', *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954): 5.

⁷⁷ 'Freeland in Mexico', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 14; 'In The Freeland League', *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 12-13: 12; 'In The Freeland League', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 17; *Frayland* (Paris 1952-1961), circa 25 issues total.

Kaczerginski, who now represented the Freeland League in Montreal, that they believed Canada would play a crucial role in the Territorialist future.⁷⁸ The following year, Mendelsberg, Fruchtbaum and Steinberg informed all the Freeland members about the new “political work” that the Freeland League was planning to undertake following Steinberg’s recent trip to Argentina and Uruguay.⁷⁹

As a result of the Surinam negotiations, the scent of almost-success lingered on in Freeland circles, and allusions to the area continued to appear until well into the 1950s.⁸⁰ Even though the Freelanders were aware that the realisation of the plan was highly unlikely,⁸¹ the Dutch and Surinamese “no” was seen as potentially temporary. For some time, the Mexican Freelanders even included a small map of the Guianas in their letterhead. In the same vein, they now presented themselves as the *Sección para la Colonización Israelita en Surinam, Guayanas Francesa y Británica*, thus very explicitly mentioning their wished-for territories in their name.⁸² In a similar vein, a special interest in (im)migration-related Australian affairs also continued to occupy the Freelanders’ minds for years after Australia ceased to be an option in 1944.⁸³

Latin America and changing visions

The Territorialists did not only focus on these older options, but also started exploring new potential destinations. In December 1953, Steinberg atypically wrote to Leftwich from New York after what had apparently been a long period of silence. He suggested reinvigorating the transatlantic bonds to get the Territorialist activities back on track: new options had presented themselves.⁸⁴ Perhaps Steinberg was referring to the “prospect in one of the republics of South America” that Lesser Fruchtbaum had written about to Abraham King in 1950.⁸⁵ Alternatively, he may have meant areas in Argentina

⁷⁸ N. Turak and M. Mendelsberg to I. Kaczerginski, 15 June 1950, YIVO RG682/325.

⁷⁹ M. Mendelsberg, L. Fruchtbaum and Steinberg to Freelanders, 22 December 1951, YIVO RG682/826.

⁸⁰ John Gorski, ‘Finance Bank For Surinam’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 7-8; ‘Freeland League Intensifies and Expands Activities’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 9; Hans Samson to Steinberg, 22 April 1950, YIVO RG682/326; ‘In The Freeland League’, *Freeland* 8, no. 10 (April-May 1955): 10-12: 10; ‘Surinam Among The Nations’, *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 6.

⁸¹ Lesser Fruchtbaum, ‘A Decade of Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 5-8.

⁸² A. King to L. Fruchtbaum, 16 March 1950, YIVO RG682/327.

⁸³ S. Stedman, ‘From Our Australian Correspondent’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 12-13; M. Bitiner, ‘Australian Jewish Community In Difficulties’, *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 9-10; S. Stedman, ‘Letter From Australia’, *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (April-May 1953): 13; ‘Their Triumph...’, *Freeland* 8, no. 11 (June-July 1955): 1-2.

⁸⁴ Steinberg to Leftwich, 26 December 1953, CZA A330/841.

⁸⁵ Fruchtbaum to A. King, 13 March 1950, YIVO RG682/325. Fruchtbaum studied different options in Latin American countries. See for example Lesser Fruchtbaum, ‘A Decade of Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct.

and Uruguay, which he had visited in 1951.⁸⁶ Especially in Argentina, the existing ICA-colonies formed part of the “spiritual capital” of the Jewish people and deserved as much attention as Israel. In fact, Steinberg argued, the experiences in Argentina had directly benefitted the settlement work in Palestine.⁸⁷ Perhaps the South American Jewish communities would even replace the destroyed European ones.⁸⁸ One anonymous *Freeland*-contributor argued that the agricultural work done there directly contributed to a Jewish cultural renaissance.⁸⁹ However, Zionism did not acknowledge its indebtedness to the work in Argentina and even ignored it altogether, just as it disregarded Territorialism: “But that, apparently, is the policy”, *Freeland* wrote cynically, “Wipe away what you regard as harmful or superfluous[.]”⁹⁰

This gaze on South America was also shared by Mordkhe Schaechter, the former leader of the Austrian DP Freelanders, and the future leader of the Freeland League. Schaechter saw a clear precedent in the Mennonite settlement activities on the South American continent.⁹¹ Another source of inspiration was the Jewish colony in Sosua, in the Dominican Republic, which was founded as a result of president Trujillo’s invitation of Jewish refugees at the Evian Conference of 1938. Indeed, the eventual number of settled refugees there had been far less than the initially mentioned 100,000. Still, when Trujillo invited an additional 5,000 Egyptian Jews to come to Sosua in 1957, the Freeland

1951): 5-8; 8; Lesser Fruchtbaum, ‘Latin America - Land for Mass Colonization. 1. Uruguay’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 4-5; Lesser Fruchtbaum, ‘Latin America - Land for Mass Colonization’ 2. Costa Rica’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 9-11; Fruchtbaum, ‘Latin America: Land for Colonization 3. Chile’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 8-9; Fruchtbaum, ‘Latin America - Land for Colonization. 4. Nicaragua’, *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1953): 9-10; Fruchtbaum, Latin America – Land For Colonization. Ecuador – Part I’, *Freeland* 8, no. 10 (April-May 1955): 3-5; Fruchtbaum, ‘Latin America - Land for Colonization. Ecuador – Part II’, *Freeland* 8, no. 11 (June-July 1955): 2-4. Other articles dealing with Latin America, are a.o.: ‘Gleanings From The Press’: ‘Land Reform In Guatemala’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 16; Heshl Klepfish, ‘Come To Costa Rica’, *Freeland* 8, no. 12 (Nov.-Dec. 1955): 6-8; A[da] S[iegel], ‘Mexico – Strange City And Mine’, *Freeland* 9, no. 3 (June-July-August 1956): 2-4.

⁸⁶ Steinberg, ‘The Cinderella Of The Jewish People’, *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 14-15. See also Lesser Fruchtbaum, ‘Latin America - Land for Mass Colonization. 1. Uruguay’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 4-5.

⁸⁷ Steinberg, ‘The Cinderella Of The Jewish People’, *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 14-15: 15. See also ‘First Congress of Colonists’ Sons in Argentine’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 13-14; ‘Let My People Go’, *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 1.

⁸⁸ “Freeland” In Spanish’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 1.

⁸⁹ J.G., ‘A Word From The Argentine’, *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 12.

⁹⁰ ‘The Silent Treatment’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 1. Also: M. Levidin [Steinberg], ‘After Fifty Years’, *Freeland* 8, no. 11 (June-July 1955): 11.

⁹¹ Schaechter to G. Shapiro (French Freelanders), 28 January 1952, YIVO RG682/826. See also ‘In The Freeland League’, *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 12-13: 12; Emma Schlichting, ‘Mennonite Colonization In Uruguay’, *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1953): 4-5; Fruchtbaum, ‘Experiment In Colonization’, *Freeland* 8, no. 12 (Nov.-Dec. 1955): 2-4; J. Winfield Fretz, ‘Organize to Colonize’ [reprinted from: *Christian Living*], *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 9-11.

League praised the initiative and studied it more closely.⁹² Lastly, in 1956, Fruchtbaum mysteriously mentioned “political options” in two countries on the South American continent, most probably Costa Rica and Ecuador.⁹³ He had spoken with the respective presidents of these countries shortly before.⁹⁴

These stories, together with the Freeland League’s own experiences in Australia and Surinam, had shown that there were areas in the world where Jewish settlement might be welcomed.⁹⁵ By 1952, Steinberg had come to realise that a large-scale concentrated settlement might be less attainable than several smaller ones.⁹⁶ He also believed that a decentralised approach to the Jewish national and cultural future would be better suited to preserving Jewish moral values that were in danger of being lost.⁹⁷ Yiddish writer Abraham (Avrom) Golomb agreed. He believed Territorialism should not be “charter-focused” like Zionism, but should invest in multiple smaller communities around the world. He advocated a “Small Territorialism”, which would ensure that the Jewish periphery would never be considered a new *galut*, in the negative meaning of the word.⁹⁸ By 1951, Lesser Fruchtbaum even explicitly supported a policy of immigration infiltration. With this stance, Fruchtbaum seemed to have abandoned Steinberg’s—and with that, the Freeland League’s—earlier rigid anti-infiltration standpoint.⁹⁹

A similar conception of Territorialism as striving for multiple rather than a single colonisation project had already been proposed a few years before, when at the second Freeland conference different existing settlements in the U.S. were mentioned.¹⁰⁰ *Freeland* occasionally zoomed in on such initiatives.¹⁰¹ In 1953, the periodical even printed an advertisement for a religious Jewish cooperative settlement for 200 families,

⁹² ‘Gleanings From The Press: The Sosua Story Resurrected’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 15; Charlotte Schaechter, ‘On The Jewish Agricultural Scene’, *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 11-12: 11.

⁹³ ‘Remarks Of Frances R. Grant [Secretary General of the Inter American Association for Democracy and Freedom/ Secretary of the International League for the Rights of Man]: Dr. I.N. Steinberg’, *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5.

⁹⁴ Fruchtbaum, ‘Freeland In Action’, *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 2-3.

⁹⁵ Lesser Fruchtbaum, ‘A Decade of Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 5-8: 8.

⁹⁶ Steinberg, ‘The Ignorant and the Am-Hooretz’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 2-3.

⁹⁷ Steinberg and Erich Fromm, ‘The Sane Society’, *Freeland* 8, no. 12 (Nov.-Dec. 1955): 8-9.

⁹⁸ Abraham Golomb, ‘A View Of Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 5-6.

⁹⁹ [Fruchtbaum], handwritten note, December 1951, YIVO RG682/323.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Resolutions Adopted By Conference’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 10.

¹⁰¹ For example: Mordkhe Schaechter, ‘Woodbine’ [about the Jewish settlement in Woodbine, New Jersey], *Freeland* 8, no. 9 (Nov.-Dec. 1954): 7-8; Mindl Rinkewich, ‘New Square: An Experiment In Jewish Community Living’ [about the recently established Hasidic living community in New York], *Freeland* 15, no. 1 (May 1962): 9-10; ‘American Jewish Life In A New Pattern’ [about different Jewish settlement projects in the U.S.], *Freeland* 11, no. 2 (July-Sept 1958): 1; Charlotte Schaechter, ‘On The Jewish Agricultural Scene’, *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 11-12: 12.

to be founded in New York.¹⁰²

After Steinberg

[A] Moses without a promised land [...] a Cassandra figure, gifted—or cursed—to foresee the dangers that lay ahead for world Jewry.¹⁰³

Steinberg died in early 1957, seven weeks after the tragic and untimely passing of his beloved daughter and closest Freeland League partner Ada Siegel.

Steinberg was grandly commemorated in all the different countries in which the Freeland League was active, including Israel. His eulogists did not shy away from hagiography.¹⁰⁴ Fruchtbaum drew a direct connection between Herzl and Steinberg: both men had attempted to “find an ultimate cure for Jewish suffering by the resettlement and colonization of Jews in uninhabited or sparsely inhabited areas.”¹⁰⁵ In fact, Steinberg had been an improved version of the Zionist leader: whereas Herzl “had [merely] shaken off the mantle of assimilation”, Steinberg had come from a religious background, “steeped in the knowledge and culture of both the East (Russia) and the West.” The disillusionment of the Russian Revolution and of the birth of Nazism had instilled in Steinberg a cosmopolitanism, that “gave way to the realization that universal brotherhood could not be achieved unless each human, group or nation acquired the possibilities for its own social and cultural development.” In contrast to Herzl, for Steinberg statehood had not been the right way to achieve these aims, but like Herzl, he did not live to see his ideals materialise.¹⁰⁶ For years, Steinberg, the “moral revolutionary”, had been the Freeland League’s most vocal and productive member. Golomb described him as a rare “whole Jew”, like a rabbi trying to bring together the “splinters” of Judaism.¹⁰⁷

Activities continued even after Steinberg’s passing. In 1964, the Freeland-representative in Mexico, Abraham King, wrote to Mordkhe Schaechter about a common friend who had just returned from a UN mission to Ethiopia. Apparently, there were

¹⁰² “On Three Things The World Rests”, *Freeland* 7, no. 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1953): 3.

¹⁰³ This is Rovner’s description of Steinberg: Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 217-8.

¹⁰⁴ *Freeland* devoted almost an entire issue to Steinberg’s commemoration: *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957). See also Benjamin Jacob Bialostotzky and Melech Ravitch, *Yitshok Nahmen Shteynberg* (1961); Draft speech Fruchtbaum, ‘Evaluation of Dr. I.N. Steinberg’, [1957], YIVO RG682/327.

¹⁰⁵ Lesser M. Fruchtbaum, ‘Tribute to Dr. I.N. Steinberg’, [1957], YIVO RG682/327, published in: *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-March 1957): 2-3.

¹⁰⁶ Draft speech Fruchtbaum, ‘Evaluation of Dr. I.N. Steinberg’, [1957], YIVO RG682/327.

¹⁰⁷ Abraham Golomb, ‘I.N. Steinberg –A Whole Jew’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 4.

options for buying land from the Ethiopian government. However, the friendly relations between Ethiopia and Israel were potentially problematic for this scheme to succeed, even though “one cannot tell how things may develop in the future in regard to Israel and the Arab countries.”¹⁰⁸

All in all, the birth of the State of Israel pushed Territorialism to start following a different, more culturally focused course, but it did not spell the end of the movement’s political interests and activities. On the one hand, following the establishment of Israel, “the majority of sympathizers and many old comrades began to move away”,¹⁰⁹ but on the other hand, only after 1948 did figures like Hans Kohn, the American-Jewish philosopher Israel Knox and the German social psychologist Erich Fromm join *Freeland’s* ranks.¹¹⁰ Both Kohn and Knox were still officially contributing editors in 1972, while Fromm formed the editorial board together with Fruchtbaum and Leybl Kahn.¹¹¹ Territorialism offered these disappointed Zionists¹¹² a possibility to voice their critique of the new Jewish state without abandoning the idea of Jewish territorial and cultural autonomy. Schaechter, who succeeded Steinberg in 1957 as the head of the movement, was largely responsible for the Yiddishist considerations that were to guide the movement from that moment onwards. Nevertheless, even he cherished political ideals after 1948. As British Territorialist E. Podolsky wrote to Schaechter in 1961: “Heartiest greeting and congratulations on your stubborn persistence in continuing the work of your [political] ideals [...] accept my best wishes for your continued work in the future”.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Abraham King to Mordkhe Schachter, 28 May 1964, YIVO RG682/326.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Georges Gershn Shapiro’, *Freeland* 15, no. 2 (Sept. 1962): 12.

¹¹⁰ Israel Knox was already a contributing editor in 1945: *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945). For more about Knox’ role in American-Jewish Diaspora Nationalism, see Simon Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 203-216. Erich Fromm first appears on the editorial board of *Freeland* in 1951: *Freeland*, 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951). Hans Kohn is first mentioned as contributing editor to *Freeland* in early 1952: *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952). *Freeland* published explicitly supportive letters by Fromm and Kohn: In The Freeland League’, *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 12-13: 13. Kohn also addressed the annual Freeland banquet in 1952: Cecile E. Kuznitz, “A Snapshot in History: The Freeland Banquet, 1952,” <http://leagueforyiddish.org/cekuta1.html - english> (retrieved 22 August 2015).

¹¹¹ *Freeland* 24, no. 1 (65) (Spring 1972).

¹¹² An example of a Zionist voicing his disappointment in the Zionist project in *Freeland* is Ihud-member and founder of its periodical *Ner* (Light): Reb Benyomin, ‘For The Sake Of Survival’, *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 9-10. Ernst Simon, co-founder of both the binationalist Zionist Brit Shalom movement and its follow-up organisation Ihud, explicitly mentioned the disappointments regarding Israel: Ernst Simon, ‘Israel Whither’ [translated and reprinted from *Ner*, May 1954], *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 12-13. Kohn’s choice to support the Freeland League might have been informed by his self-proclaimed wish to commit himself to the “spiritual-liberal movement of progressive humanity” following Brit Shalom’s dissolution: Quoted in Zohar Maor, “Moderation from Right to Left: The Hidden Roots of Brit Shalom,” *Jewish Social Studies* 19, no. 2 (2013): 93.

¹¹³ E. Podolsky to Schaechter, [1961], YIVO RG682/351.

On 25 and 26 May 1957, the first International Freeland Conference since 1946 was held in New York City.¹¹⁴ It was decided there that both small-scale and large-scale colonisation should remain on the Freeland agenda. Cultural work was important, but most efforts still needed to be devoted to colonisation and thus also to political work. As Fruchtbaum asserted, the Freeland League was now a very small organisation, formed by a "handful of idealists". To continue its work, cooperation should be sought with organisations such as HIAS and the Jewish Agricultural Organisation.¹¹⁵ The work of these two bodies was exemplary, but unfortunately as of yet not aimed at concentrated, cooperative settlement. Together with an investment in Yiddish, creating such settlements remained the continued post-war Territorialist aim.¹¹⁶

Jewish Politics

The British connection

At the beginning of 1947, Steinberg asked E.W. Podolsky, head of the British Freeland branch, to help recruit British non-Zionist organisations like the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Jewish Fellowship.¹¹⁷ After the war, the Freelanders also continued to lobby British Labour politicians for their support.¹¹⁸ The success of such British-Territorialist cooperation seemed more likely than ever, since developments in U.S. Zionist circles were beneficial to the Territorialist cause: non-Zionist Jews in the U.K. were growing increasingly wary of the anti-British sentiments on the other side of the Atlantic as a reaction to the British policies in Palestine. American Zionists were pressuring the U.S. government to block the granting of a major loan to the U.K., leading to great dismay amongst both British Jews and non-Jewish politicians.¹¹⁹ It was not unlikely that under

¹¹⁴ 'In The Freeland League', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 17; 'Report On The Freeland Conference, May 25-26, 1957', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 5-7.

¹¹⁵ 'Report On The Freeland Conference, May 25-26, 1957', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 5-7.

¹¹⁶ 'Resolutions of Freeland Conference', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 7-8; Fruchtbaum, 'Outline Of Proposed Activities Of The Freeland League', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957) 8-9.

¹¹⁷ Steinberg to Podolsky, 8 January 1947, YIVO RG366/122 and 527.

¹¹⁸ Steinberg to Proskauer, 23 February 1945, YIVO RG366/73.

¹¹⁹ Steinberg to Proskauer, 26 June 1946, YIVO RG366/550. For a (slightly biased) overview of the American-Jewish campaign against the US loan to the UK, in which the famous Cleveland-based rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, Stephen Wise and also Proskauer himself played crucial roles, see Rafael Medoff, "A debt the British paid – and one they didn't," *Jerusalem Post* (15 January 2007), <http://www.jpost.com/Features/A-debt-the-British-paid-and-one-they-didnt> (retrieved 11 November 2015). For more about the Anglo-American loan negotiations, including the American-Jewish opposition to it, see Randall Bennett Woods, *A Changing of the Guard: Anglo-American Relations, 1941-1946* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 332-362.

such circumstances influential forces would be much more inclined than before to support an alternative to Zionism. Steinberg was aware of this opportunity and used the threat of U.S. measures against the U.K. to convince British politicians to support the Territorialist plans for British Guiana and other locations.¹²⁰ Moreover, the British had to simultaneously appease the Palestinian Arabs and help solve the Jewish immigration issues. A Territorialist scheme could offer a way to negotiate these conflicting interests.¹²¹

This potential pragmatic value of Territorialism for the British explains the support by politicians such as Arthur Creech Jones and, initially more reservedly, David Gammans.¹²² The latter advocated the Guiana scheme in the House of Commons on 15 July 1946, evoking a positive reply from Colonial Secretary George Hall. Another politician, MP M. Blackburn, published an article in the London *Daily Herald* endorsing Territorialism.¹²³

On 13 November 1945, Secretary of State Ernest Bevin announced the appointment of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine in the House of Commons. The Freelanders understood this as an Anglo-American acknowledgement of the inability of Palestine to solve the Jewish immigration problem. A day later, they submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Clement Attlee about the Freeland League plans for colonisation in the British Empire.¹²⁴ As we have seen, Steinberg would even testify before this commission in early 1946.

The Territorialists saw indirect support for their critical stance towards Palestine in the British political reactions to the violent actions of the Irgun and the Hagana.¹²⁵ The fact that a Colonial Development Commission on British Guiana and Honduras (or: British Guiana and British Honduras Settlement Commission) was created in 1946 was also encouraging.¹²⁶ Under-secretary for the colonies Ivor Thomas advised the Freeland League to seize this opportunity to have the British government finance a Jewish

¹²⁰ Steinberg to Captain Raymond Blackburn, 14 October 1946; Steinberg to [?] Cudlipp, 22 October 1946; Steinberg to P.C. Gordon-Walker (MP, Parliamentary Secretary), 7 November 1946, YIVO RG366/571.

¹²¹ 'Report From Europe', *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 2, 16: 16.

¹²² David Gammans to Herwald, 14 June 1944, YIVO RG255, Box 2; Gammans to Steinberg, 17 July 1946, YIVO RG366/571.

¹²³ 'Report From Europe', *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 2, 16: 16.

¹²⁴ Steinberg to Clement Attlee, 14 November 1945, YIVO RG682/496; Steinberg to Waley Cohen, 15 November 1945, YIVO RG366/210.

¹²⁵ 'What Parliament Thinks', *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 8-10, 17.

¹²⁶ Herwald to Creech Jones, 3 June 1948, YIVO RG255, Box 2; 'Newspaper of morning of Tuesday, 14th January. Press Announcement', attached to: Ivor Thomas to Steinberg, 13 January 1947, YIVO RG264, Box 1. The Freeland League wrote directly to this Settlement Commission: Freeland League to secretary British Guiana and British Honduras Settlement Commission, 20 June 1947, YIVO RG554, Box 2.

settlement project.¹²⁷ However, the phrasing of the aims of the Commission, as well as the general change of attitude regarding ethnically concentrated settlements, make it seem unlikely that the British would have been interested in creating an exclusively Jewish colony in one of their overseas territories.

To the United States

In addition to this continued engagement with British politics, the post-war Freeland League leadership entered a new American-Jewish context that partly changed its ideological focus and behaviour. Gabriel Davidson was the managing director of the Jewish Agricultural Society, in many ways an inspirational body for the Territorialists. In 1946, he stressed the importance of finding a strong basis in “American Israel” for colonisation efforts. This opinion was quoted in *Freeland*.¹²⁸

The shift from a predominantly European organisation to one led by U.S.-based Jews also meant a return to the perceived divide between East and West that the pre-war Freeland League had largely managed to bridge. In 1944, the young American corporal Myron R. Graff, stationed in Australia, voiced the feelings of American Jews regarding their European brethren:

I wish you [the Freeland League] success in your endeavours for the fostering of your plan [in the Kimberley district], although at present I cannot for myself picture myself as a permanent citizen of this country, firstly because America means so much to me and secondly because I have never felt the brunt of the Nazi whip. A desire to pioneer is not keen. I don't say on the other hand that it is good enough for them and not for me, but you will agree that the outlook on life is so different and the reasons so many and in variance with theirs.¹²⁹

A few years later, the Rumanian Freelanders turned these arguments around to appeal to their “brothers and sisters in America” for support for the Surinam project. American Jews,

¹²⁷ Ivor Thomas to Steinberg, 13 January 1947, RG264, Box 1. The Freeland League had actively lobbied Thomas. He was hosted during a Freeland lunch, at which occasion he expressed himself to be in favour of the British Guiana scheme: Steinberg to Podolsky, 8 January 1947, YIVO RG366/122 and 527.

¹²⁸ T.O., ‘Jews and the Land’, *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946).

¹²⁹ ‘A Soldier Writes’, *Freeland* (August 1944).

who have long lived in peace and plenty, who never had to breathe this air poisoned by Gentile hate and Jewish blood—you have been chosen now to determine our fate. For you are still a part of us. We are all of one body, and only a travel permit has decided that it should be we and our children who shall suffer, and not you and yours.

In other words: Jews in the U.S. owed it to their European brethren to assist, at least financially: “We must become partners in this work of reconstruction. We were destined for it by our sorrows, you by the peace and comfort of your lives.”¹³⁰

The move to New York City meant that the Freeland League now had to find its way on the American-Jewish political scene typified by “a rancorous intra-Jewish battle between Zionists and non-Zionists for control of the American Jewish community”.¹³¹ Indeed, in 1944, Steinberg observed a Jewish political stage filled with a plethora of groups, factions, movements and individuals, very much like the pre-war situation in Central and Eastern Europe. Steinberg deplored this chaotic scene on which there was no inner solidarity within the Jewish world. All factions had “their bureaucracies, their long-established leadership, their ‘tricks of the trade’”, but the Jewish masses were excluded from decision-making processes. This created a void that Territorialism could fill.¹³² At the same time, the Freeland League would labour to promote a democratisation process within American Jewish politics.¹³³ Two years later, Steinberg concluded that the situation had only worsened. An ideological “hysteria” was raging throughout the Jewish world, offering countless often conflicting normative viewpoints on Jewish life and harming Jewish unity in the process: “How can the reader possibly fight off the flood when it comes roaring at him in a tide of print; when he is pressured in the name of patriotism, philanthropy, nationalism, religion, socialism? Subjected to such an

¹³⁰ ‘Rumanian Jewry Calls America’, *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 3.

¹³¹ James Loeffler, “‘The Conscience of America’: Human Rights, Jewish Politics, and American Foreign Policy at the 1945 United Nations San Francisco Conference,” *Journal of American History*, (September 2013): 403-4, 406, 425. In his analysis of the American Jewish Committee’s (AJC) Human Rights-activities in 1945, Loeffler demonstrates how the AJC’s efforts on behalf of human rights were not inspired by liberal values that were both intrinsically American and Jewish, nor that it was the Nazi-threat and shortly thereafter the Shoah trauma that led directly to the AJC-driven Human Rights agenda. It was a calculated “act of political theater” meant to counteract the growing influence of Zionism in the U.S. and to secure the AJC’s place as the sole representative of American Jews.

¹³² Steinberg, ‘Free Land and Free People’ [reprinted from *Oifn Shvel*], *Freeland* (August 1944): 7; Steinberg, ‘From Our Point of View. What is the Address?’, *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 4.

¹³³ ‘Our Press’: ‘In the United States’, *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 19.

overwhelming totalitarian barrage the average man soon finds himself lacking the courage to think.”¹³⁴ Obviously, Territorialism offered a way out of this chaotic situation.

There appeared to be fertile ground for Territorialism in the United States. Before the Second World War, Zionism had not yet been a mass-movement in the United States. The Balfour Declaration was received lukewarmly due to the fear of American Jews that they would be suspected of having dual loyalties.¹³⁵ As Steinberg wrote in October 1945, the atmosphere surrounding Palestine in American political circles had even worsened during the war years, making the chances of success in the Middle East smaller and rendering the work of the Freeland League more urgent than ever.¹³⁶

The Reform movement in America was openly against political Zionism, and Jewish-dominated workers’ unions declared Zionism incompatible with the international class struggle. Moreover, they saw it as an unwanted threat to the rights of Arabs in Palestine. The Jewish Socialist Federation was also anti-Zionist.¹³⁷ The Territorialists made an effort to present themselves as part of these socialist and labour-oriented parts of the American-Jewish political landscape by publishing tributes to, and studies of other movements and organisations. This move made sense, as the majority of American Jews had liberal, left-wing, socialist leanings. Labour organisations, often dominated by Jews, also offered important financial and moral support.¹³⁸

Even if these organisations did not favour Zionism, the Zionist movement did start to gain ground in the American-Jewish community as a whole after 1945, a development already exemplified in the 1942 Biltmore Conference and the Biltmore Program it produced. As we will see, this increasing Zionist strength led to a hostile attitude on the part of the Zionists towards the Territorialists, whom they saw as posing unwanted competition. American Zionists like Ida Silverman staged media-attacks on the

¹³⁴ Steinberg, ‘End the War!’, *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 5-7, 14-15: 5. Also: Isaac N. Steinberg, “Nider Mit Der Milkhome [End the War],” (1947); *Souvenir Journal on the Occasion of the Yearly Luncheon of the Freeland League. Park Royal Hotel, 23 West 73rd Street, New York City, Sunday, May 24, 1959*, (New York 1959).

¹³⁵ James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance 1914-1918* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 131; Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 21.

¹³⁶ Steinberg to Waley Cohen, 19 October 1945, YIVO RG366/210.

¹³⁷ Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade*, 140, 143, 147.

¹³⁸ Especially after 1948, space in *Freeland* was devoted to the activities of organisations such as the ILGWU and the Workmen’s Circle. For example: William Stern, ‘The Second Generation’ and ‘David Dubinsky [president of the ILGWU] Celebrates His 60ieth Birthday’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 6-7. Other organisations were also discussed: ‘The Educational Department of the YMHA [Young Men’s Hebrew Association]’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 12-13; Samuel R. Weiss, ‘Young Israel Movement’, *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (April-May 1953): 11-12.

Territorialist activities.¹³⁹ According to Joshua Karlip, no (American) Jewish leader ever seriously considered supporting a non-Zionist political organisation striving for any degree of autonomy.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, in 1945, even the non-Zionist American Jewish Committee rejected a request by the Freeland League to participate in an AJC-proposed conference of Jewish organisations on the grounds that it did not wish to invite one-issue parties.¹⁴¹ Steinberg lamented that leading American non-Zionist Jewish forces like the AJC were wasting time trying to influence Zionism while ignoring alternatives like those offered by the Freeland League.¹⁴² By 1956, the Territorialists observed that many American Jewish organisations had been won over by Zionism, often in rather covert ways. According to *Freeland*, one such obscured attempt to lure previously non-Zionist organisations into the Zionist camp was World Jewish Congress (WJC) president Philip Klutznik's suggestion to create a new international federation to discuss Jewish problems. Originally, the Territorialists scorned, the WJC had been meant as exactly such a federation. Now that the Congress had become openly Zionist and therefore unattractive to some Jewish bodies, the cunning Klutznik has proposed the creation of a seemingly neutral but in reality also Zionist umbrella organisation.¹⁴³

Despite this growing influence of Zionism on the American-Jewish scene, the Territorialists continued to enjoy influential non-Zionist backing, partly due to the organisation's physical presence in New York City. As we have seen, the ILGWU and the Jewish Labor Committee in 1948 donated \$10,000 and \$1,000 respectively to the Committee of Sponsors that was formed for the Surinam project. The Workmen's Circle set up various Freeland groups and activities.¹⁴⁴ It even organised a joint conference with the Freeland League on 2 March 1947.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ Louis Rittenberg (American Bureau of the *Jewish Chronicle*) to Steinberg, 24 February 1947, YIVO RG366/24; Kreine Alexander to *South African Jewish Times*, May 1941, YIVO RG366/584.

¹⁴⁰ Joshua Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013), 305.

¹⁴¹ Proskauer to Steinberg, 5 March 1945, YIVO RG366/73.

¹⁴² Steinberg to Waley Cohen, 6 January 1947, YIVO RG366/122. The AJC's rejection of the Freeland League's participation is all the more striking, as in 1943, AJC-leader Judge Proskauer had criticised the newly founded American Jewish Conference for its preoccupation with large organisations: Loeffler, "'The Conscience of America'," 408.

¹⁴³ 'Editorial', *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 1.

¹⁴⁴ 'Committee of Sponsors being formed, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May 1948): 1, 7; Freeland Office Files Workmen's Circle Committee for Freeland, YIVO RG366/151; 'Report of the Second Freeland Convention', 9-10 October 1948, YIVO RG366/167; Invitation to Freeland League/Arbeter Ring event for J.A. Cherniack (mentioning a "W[orkmen's] C[ircle] Committee for "Freeland""), 19 April [1947], YIVO RG264, Box 1. During the banquet of the first Freeland Conference in the U.S., held between 22 and 24 November 1946, Workmen's Circle representatives stated their hope for future cooperation with the Freeland League:

Another important supporter was *New York Times* editor and publisher Arthur Sulzberger, with whom Steinberg engaged in frequent correspondence.¹⁴⁶ In late 1944, Sulzberger agreed to join the newly established Advisory Council for the Freeland League in New York.¹⁴⁷ The impressions he gathered on a trip to Australia during this same period, however, seemed to temper his enthusiasm for concentrated settlement as opposed to individual immigration. In December he wrote to Steinberg: "As you know, I have at all times felt that the emphasis should be placed on the right of Jews to live anywhere and to move around the world with the same freedom as persons of other faiths. It would seem that the opportunity for individual immigration is offered in Australia and that is what I have now come to believe is the line to be pursued."¹⁴⁸ This was not the line the Freeland League wished to pursue and relations with Sulzberger cooled down for a while. In 1946, the publisher seemed to have come around again to the Territorialist cause and Steinberg expressed his contentment with Sulzberger's positive response to the discussions that the Freeland League had opened with the Dutch, French and British governments regarding their respective Guianas: "I am happy to see that you again acknowledge the role of England as the 'historic refuge for oppressed nationals.'" Steinberg also appreciated Sulzberger's recent statement that "the fate of an unhappy people should not be subordinated to statehood". As Steinberg read it, this position formed an endorsement of the Territorialist activities.¹⁴⁹ At the very least, it was a statement close to Steinberg's own anti-statist views.

Communism

The U.S. setting also forced Territorialism to be even more cautious than before in formulating its position towards communism. The Freelanders wrote cryptically about the challenges for their Los Angeles branch: the "Washington enquiry into Hollywood leftism had created a general phobia of all 'causes'".¹⁵⁰ The philosopher Sidney Hook, who supported the Freeland League and was a contributing editor to *Freeland* as of 1946, personified the Territorialists' changed position towards communist matters: Hook, a

'Freeland Notes', *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 2. Already in 1945, a Freeland meeting was held at the offices in New York City of the ILGWU: 'Freeland Public Meeting', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 20-1.

¹⁴⁵ 'English Speaking Division Grows As Activity Increases', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 2.

¹⁴⁶ See YIVO RG366/349.

¹⁴⁷ Steinberg to Robert Waley Cohen, 28 November 1944, YIVO RG366/121.

¹⁴⁸ A. Sulzberger to Steinberg, 16 December 1944, YIVO RG366/349.

¹⁴⁹ Steinberg to A. Sulzberger, 28 October 1946, YIVO RG366/349.

¹⁵⁰ 'Los Angeles Campaigns Yields New Groups', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 5.

former communist himself, became an outspoken critic of communism in the United States. Incidentally, he was, together with amongst others Hannah Arendt, also one of the co-signatories of an open letter by Albert Einstein to the *New York Times*, published on 4 December 1948, in which the American audience was warned about Menachem Begin's Herut party's violent and "fascist" ideology and behaviour.¹⁵¹

Cold War hostilities increasingly coloured the American political landscape. Moreover, already before the war Steinberg had been involved with anarchist anti-communist circles. The post-war period saw a continuation of this Territorialist appreciation for anarchist libertarianism.¹⁵² These affiliations did not convince the non-communist world that Territorialism was untainted by the enemy ideology. One of the chief reasons for the suspension of the Surinam negotiations in 1948 was the concern, mainly voiced by Dutch policy makers, that there would be communist elements among the prospective immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁵³

Especially regarding the Central and Eastern European Territorialists such a suspicion of communist sympathies may not have been completely unfounded: in October 1947, the Polish Freeland M. Balberyski addressed the annual convention for Polish-Soviet friendship, praising the Birobidzhan project.¹⁵⁴ In 1959, Michael Astour, the future author of the only history of the Freeland League ever to be written,¹⁵⁵ even appraisingly described Birobidzhan as the only large-scale Territorialist experiment in Jewish history. This is all the more striking, as the Territorialist movement was never involved in Birobidzhan. Astour, however, was not sympathetic to Soviet communism:¹⁵⁶ according to him, the main reason why the project had not been successful was because of the lack of interest the Soviet government had shown in it.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ 'Freeland Public Meeting', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 20-1; *Freeland* 2, no. 1 (February 1946); Albert Einstein, Sidney Hook, Hannah Arendt, et. al., "New Palestine Party. Visit of Menachen Begin and Aims of Political Movement Discussed, *New York Times* (December 4, 1948), 12.

¹⁵² Herman Frank on the history of the *Freie Arbeiter Shtime* (or: *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*), *Freeland*, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 5.

¹⁵³ Almagor, "Een Vergeten Alternatief", 93-6.

¹⁵⁴ 'Freeland League In Europe Reports: Poland', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 3, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Michael C. Astour, *Geshikhte Fun Der Frayland-Lige* (Buenos Aires, 1967).

¹⁵⁶ Michael Astour, 'Ten Years Ago. A Memorial Reminiscence Of Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 20, no. 1 (Jan. 1967): 5-8: 5.

¹⁵⁷ Michael Astour, 'Thirty Years Of Birobidzhan', *Freeland* 12, no. 1 (April-June 1959): 9-10. Astour, the son of the Polish Territorialist Joseph Czernichow who perished during the Shoah, and one of the founders of the Polish Freeland League himself, disappeared during the war and only resurfaced in 1957 when he was able to enter Poland from the USSR as a repatriate: Michael Astour, 'Ten Years Ago. A Memorial Reminiscence Of Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 20, no. 1 (Jan. 1967): 5-8: 5.

Moreover, possibly pressured to do so by political circumstances, the Rumanian Freeland, in its 'Resolutions' of March 1948, openly praised the heroic Red Army, as well as the socialist Rumanian government.¹⁵⁸ British communist publisher and supporter of the "moral underdog" Victor Gollancz was seen by some Territorialists as a problematic Freeland-contact. Still, he remained affiliated with the movement.¹⁵⁹ In the late 1940s, he even published Steinberg's account of the Australia scheme.¹⁶⁰ While openly anti-communist, the idealistic Steinberg retained his beliefs in the ideological qualities of socialism. This continued attachment to socialist ideals springs forward from his appreciation of sociologist and *Freeland*-contributor Erich Fromm's work. Fromm's vision was a "courageous acknowledgement of socialism at a time, when scientific scepticism and moral cynicism rule supreme".¹⁶¹

Finally, the ambivalent relationship between Territorialism and Marxist-inspired Bundism during the interwar period has already been described. After the war, one Territorialist openly rejected the Bund on the basis of its "baseless culturism [...] on the spot". Yiddish alone was not enough to bind the Jewish people together; a physical concentration of Jews was necessary.¹⁶² This was, however, an isolated opinion: in the post-war Freeland League, the tendency had shifted to a more positive assessment of the Bund. In 1948, American Freelanders Saul Goodman published an article on the occasion of the passing of the Polish Bundist Shlomo Mendelson. Goodman commended the Bund for having transcended its own party line and for becoming the "great cultural movement of Poland's Jewish masses".¹⁶³ By 1965, the Freelanders observed that both movements, the Bund and the Freeland League, found each other in their opposition to the Zionist "*Gleichschaltung* [uniformization] of Jewish community life".¹⁶⁴

This appreciation for the Bund was mostly based on its Yiddishist accomplishments

¹⁵⁸ 'Rumanian Freeland Resolutions' *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 2.

¹⁵⁹ Matthew Frank, "The New Morality—Victor Gollancz, 'Save Europe Now' and the German Refugee Crisis, 1945-46" *Twentieth Century British History* 17, no. 2 (2006): 236. Gollancz shared the Freeland League's critical stance towards the treatment of the Palestinian Arabs and raised money on their behalf through his Jewish Society for Human Suffering (JSHS): Paul Kelemen, *The British Left and Zionism: History of a Divorce* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 132.

¹⁶⁰ Advertisement for Isaac Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land: In Search Of A Home* (1948), *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 14; Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*.

¹⁶¹ Steinberg and Erich Fromm, 'The Sane Society', *Freeland* 8, no. 12 (Nov.-Dec. 1955): 8-9: 8.

¹⁶² 'The place of Freeland with Jewish Life', address to the Second Freeland Conference, NYC, October 1948, YIVO RG682/566.

¹⁶³ Saul Goodman, 'Shlomo Mendelson', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 5. More praise for TSISHO and their "martyred pedagogues" can be found in Ch. Kazdan, 'Blessed Be Their Memory' *Freeland* 8, no. 11 (June-July 1955): 6-7

¹⁶⁴ 'Fourth World Conference Of The "Bund"', *Freeland* 18, no. 1 (May 1965): 3.

and anti-Zionist attitudes. The first Freeland Conference in the U.S. in 1946 declared stimulating Yiddish language and culture an explicit Territorialist aim.¹⁶⁵ So far, *Freeland* admitted in 1954, politics had always taken precedence over culture in the Territorialist work, but this was now changing.¹⁶⁶ As Steinberg stated, preserving Yiddish meant to maintain “the wholeness of the Jewish soul”.¹⁶⁷

Since 1925, YIVO had been central to the development of modern Yiddishist work.¹⁶⁸ The connection between the Freeland League and YIVO was already forged in the interwar period via figures like Kalmanovitch and Tcherikower, who were affiliated with both organisations. During the war, this connection had been strengthened when the Territorialists and YIVO-members both found themselves in New York. Central Freeland member Lesser Fruchtbaum was also affiliated with YIVO, and *Freeland* published articles about the organisation.¹⁶⁹

As we have seen, despite this focal change from Territorialist politics to Yiddishism,¹⁷⁰ by the 1960s, *Freeland* still contained numerous articles exploring different locales for settlement purposes.¹⁷¹ However, the Freelanders realised that both their political and their Yiddishist activities were losing their audiences. Referring to Nathan Birnbaum’s description of Jewish orthodoxy in a predominantly secular context, one Territorialist in 1966 aptly described the Freeland League’s work as labouring “in exile among Jews”.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ *Ershte Frayland-Konferentz in Amerike*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Editorial note to Blanche Garfinkle, ‘Papa And Voltaire’s Birthday’, ‘In The Press’, *Freeland* 8, no. 9 (Nov.-Dec. 1954): 15-16.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Joseph Leftwich, ‘J.V. Podolsky’, *Freeland* XVI, no. 1 (51) (April 1963): 5-6, 12: 5.

¹⁶⁸ For an excellent recent analysis of YIVO’s history, see: Cecile Esther Kuznitz, *Yivo and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹⁶⁹ Libby Shub, ‘The Yivo. Yiddish Scientific Institute’, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 16-18.

¹⁷⁰ Examples of articles dealing with Yiddish and Yiddishism: Leo Steinberg, ‘The values of Yiddish Literature. An interview with S. Niger’, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 9-10, 16; Mita and William Charney, ‘A Congress For Yiddish Culture’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 15; ‘On The Jewish Cultural Scene’, *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 8-9; ‘On The Jewish Cultural Scene’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 11; ‘Frank Atran Dies’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 11; ‘On The Jewish Cultural Front,’ *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 13; ‘On The Cultural Scene’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 10; Uriel Weinreich, ‘Yiddish Studies At Columbia University’ *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 14-15; Max Holtzman, ‘Yiddish Children’s Theatre In Los Angeles’, *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 6-7; Mordkhe Schaechter, ‘Battle Of The Letters’, *Freeland* 9, no. 3 (June-July-August 1956): 6-7.

¹⁷¹ For an example of a later issue containing both “old-school” Territorialist articles and pieces dealing with Jewish cultural affairs, see: *Freeland* XVII, no. 2 (54) (July 1964).

¹⁷² ‘In Exile Among Jews’, *Freeland* 19, no. 1 (March 1966): 3.

Diaspora

Through its increased investment in Yiddishism, Territorialism's engagement with Jewish Diaspora life grew as well. After the horrific experiences of the recent war, colonising "on the basis of healthy colonization principles" and therewith leaving the "blood-stained soil of Europe" would have a cleansing effect.¹⁷³ In 1944, Steinberg had already dramatically announced the post-war aims of the Freeland League: it was to become more than just a Territorialist movement, "a healthy, fresh stream of Jewish popular strength; [...] a desire for the renaissance of the energies of the people". His daughter Ada also stressed how a Territorialist scheme would show that Jews were taking matters into their own hands.¹⁷⁴ The Kimberley scheme would not lead to Jewish assimilation in Australian society, but to the regeneration of these Jews, turning them into a new type of *Australian* Jews. Steinberg even imagined such a cultural process inspiring Jewish poems about kangaroos, "[y]et their [the poets'] voice would be the voice of Israel, and the rhythm and the sigh of their songs would be Jewish."¹⁷⁵ Territorialism was not just about the survival of Jews, but also about their "revival. Spiritually, economically, and culturally, we should revive our whole heritage for our continued creative development".¹⁷⁶ As another Freelanders wrote in the same year, the Diaspora possessed enough "creative power" to make a Territorialist project work.¹⁷⁷

Even though Steinberg was convinced that such a regenerative aim could be best achieved in a Territorialist settlement, he did not dismiss other possibilities, either in Palestine or in the Jewish Diaspora with its rich history: "We are equally concerned with the Jew who insists on rebuilding his European life, the Jew who wants to create a political state in Palestine, and the Jew who will settle in a FREE LAND to continue there his Jewish heritage."¹⁷⁸ In an article entitled 'The Three Roads', Steinberg elaborated on this Dubnowian-inspired concept of having three different paths to ensuring a Jewish

¹⁷³ 'Resolutions of the first Freeland conference of the D.P. camps held in Upper Austria on October 5th, 1947', YIVO RG366/114.

¹⁷⁴ Steinberg, 'Free Land and Free People' [reprinted from *Oifn Shvel*], *Freeland* (August 1944): 7; Ada Siegel, 'For a Jewish Cooperative Settlement in the United States', *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945): 5-6.

¹⁷⁵ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 118-20.

¹⁷⁶ 'Washington Testimony', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 3,4, 12-13: 3; *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 2.

¹⁷⁷ Shalom Goldberg, 'Economic Emancipation for the Jew', *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 9-12.

¹⁷⁸ Steinberg, 'Free Land and Free People' [reprinted from *Oifn Shvel*], *Freeland* (August 1944): 7. See also Willy Birkenmaier, "Judentum Ohne Rückkehr Nach Palästina: Isaak Steinberg und der Territorialismus als Alternative zum Zionismus," *Trumah*, no. 19 (2010): 93, 94.

future.¹⁷⁹ In such a future, Jews would survive both as individuals and as a community, while maintaining their “immortal system of ideas, beliefs, actions and hopes which is enshrined in our hearts as Judaism, —Yiddishkeit [Yiddishness]”. These “three roads”, or “schools of thought” led back to Europe or the United States, to Zionist Palestine, or to a non-political Freeland League settlement. Jews should have a free choice as to where they would build up their lives: “*Theirs* is the choice; *ours* is the preparation.” The three paths should, however, be part of one coordinated program, “[b]ecause, in spite of all the [political] division, we are *one* people”.¹⁸⁰ After all, Steinberg told the Anglo-American Committee in 1946, the Jews also “perished as a unit” in the Holocaust.¹⁸¹

Yiddish and Gegenwartsarbeit

The post-war Freelanders decided that Yiddish language and culture were to be central in the Territorialist settlement.¹⁸² Territorialists criticised the on-going language war between Hebrew and Yiddish, which even led to violent attacks on Yiddish newspaper offices in Palestine. In reality, the Freelanders argued, Yiddish and Hebrew, or, in Steinberg’s words, “Vilno and Jerusalem”, were compatible.¹⁸³ The Zionist-inspired elimination of Yiddish was even counterproductive to a Hebrew-focused approach: as fewer American-Jewish children spoke Yiddish at home, their mastery of Hebrew also deteriorated.¹⁸⁴ Aaron Steinberg, head of the cultural department of the World Jewish Congress in London (and Isaac Steinberg’s brother), underlined in 1953 that biblical and not modern Hebrew formed the linguistic foundation of Judaism. Therefore, the preservation of Yiddish as the real, living Jewish vernacular was necessary, also because it “is saturated with the inherited values of Jewish culture”.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Kuznitz, *Yivo*, 147; ‘A Parting Of The Ways?’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 1.

¹⁸⁰ Steinberg, ‘The Three Roads’, *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 1-3. Steinberg’s three-way solution was reiterated in: ‘Freeland World Outlook Convincingly Presented’, *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 4, 6, and: Steinberg, ‘The Way Of Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 2-4.

¹⁸¹ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 1.

¹⁸² A.o.: Saul Goodman, ‘Territorialism, Autonomy, Nationhood’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 9-10; 10; *Ershte Frayland-Konferentz in Amerike*, 3.

¹⁸³ S. Stedman, ‘Hebrew + Yiddish=1’, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 16-7; Steinberg, ‘Vilno and Jerusalem’, *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 5-6. See also Eliyahu Schulman, ‘The Israeli Campaign Against Yiddish’, *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954): 11-12.

¹⁸⁴ ‘Straws In The Wind’, *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 5.

¹⁸⁵ Aron Steinberg, ‘Our Cultural Prospects’, *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 2-4.

The Freelanders openly regretted the divide between Israel and the rest of the Jewish world that the exclusive attention to Hebrew as a Jewish language had created.¹⁸⁶ The Zionists also observed this growing distance, but blamed it on the stubbornness of Jews outside of Israel who would not migrate to the Jewish state. *Freeland* proposed a more holistic approach: a Jewish world parliament rather than one-on-one cooperation between Israel and the Diaspora.¹⁸⁷ They also shared Simon Rawidowicz' objections to the choice of the name "Israel" for the new Jewish state. Traditionally, this word had always referred to the Jewish people, regardless of where they were. By connecting it to one particular geographical place, all other Jewish life was unjustly negated.¹⁸⁸

What the Zionists did not seem to understand, the Territorialists asserted, was that 94 per cent of Jewry lived outside of Palestine and would for the most part stay there.¹⁸⁹ The American Jewish community was not at all inferior to the Israeli one,¹⁹⁰ despite the fact that Israeli emissaries voiced such opinions during their visits to the United States.¹⁹¹ By contrast, Territorialism did not neglect the day-to-day needs of the enormous Diaspora. By early 1947, "[t]he Freeland League ha[d] emerged from the realm of study and propaganda, and ha[d] entered the realm of real achievement".¹⁹²

To continue this *Gegenwartsarbeit*, an official Yiddish-speaking branch of the Freeland League was founded in London on 22 June 1946, counting 25 members.¹⁹³ Philadelphia-based Freeland A. Fishman admitted at the first post-war Freeland Conference in November 1946 that it was unclear when the Territorialist project would materialise. "Let us, therefore, in the meanwhile [...] live as Jews, speak Yiddish as Jews, bring up our children as Jews."¹⁹⁴ These aims were reiterated at the Second Freeland Conference in October 1948: author Aaron Glanz-Leyeles expressed his belief that the Freeland League should now formulate a concept of Territorialism that was inseparable

¹⁸⁶ 'Resolutions Adopted By Conference', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 10; Mita and William Charney, 'A Congress For Yiddish Culture', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 15; 'A Parting Of The Ways?', *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 1.

¹⁸⁷ 'Unity, Not Polarity', *Freeland* 7, no. 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1953): 1.

¹⁸⁸ 'Gleanings from the Press': 'State of Israel - or Land of Israel', *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 8-9.

¹⁸⁹ 'Left-Handed Zionism', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 8-12: 8.

¹⁹⁰ W. Zuckerman, 'Where Is Our Inferiority', *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 13.

¹⁹¹ B.I. Bialostotzky, 'The Miracles Of Jewish Reality', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 3-4.

¹⁹² 'From Our Point Of View: Let's Talk Openly', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 3, 16: 3.

¹⁹³ 'Freeland Notes: London', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 19.

¹⁹⁴ 'Report of the First Freeland Conference (Held in New York City on November 23rd and 24th, 1946)', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 13-15: 13. A. Ganz proposed to invest in Yiddish language and culture in the Americas: A. Ganz, 'The Two Tunnels', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948).

from the Yiddish language and culture.¹⁹⁵ Outside the U.S., the Rumanian Freelanders laboured for the establishment of Yiddish schools in their country.¹⁹⁶

Especially after May 1948, the Freeland League's engagement with Yiddishist matters became an integral part of its programme. The destruction of the important Jewish communities in cities like Wilna, Warsaw and Lublin had spiritually "orphaned" Judaism in both the Diaspora and in Israel.¹⁹⁷ Investing in a renewed "Yiddishkayt"—referring not just to the Yiddish language, but to the total sum of all the elements that made up Yiddish culture—would benefit not only the development of Jews as a people: "A collective Yiddishkayt [...] would again best contribute to the world's Menschlechkayt [humanness]," as the House of Israel was larger than the State of Israel.¹⁹⁸ For this to work, "the fatal inner uneasiness of being a Jew" had to be "eliminated". A Territorialist settlement would increase the value of Jewish life, by "combining economic constructive work with the spiritual efforts of the Jewish genius. Home, school and communal life would be coordinated".¹⁹⁹

In a similar vein, the Freeland Youth League set as one of its aims in 1945 to educate American Jewish youth in matters pertaining to Judaism. This shows both the Freeland League's preoccupation with Jewish tradition, and the fact that its now mainly American audience felt itself disconnected from its own Jewish heritage.²⁰⁰ American Jewish children not only lacked education in their parents' and grandparents' language, namely Yiddish, but also knew very little about Jewish religious customs. *Freeland* therefore increasingly published about American-Jewish education.²⁰¹

Religion

This education was to be about religion and culture, but it was not to impose religious beliefs. Despite Steinberg's own religious background, his movement was less openly

¹⁹⁵ 'Freeland League Intensifies and Expands Activities', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 9.

¹⁹⁶ 'Rumanian Freeland Resolutions' *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 2.

¹⁹⁷ Steinberg, 'The Jubilee Of An Idea', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 2-3.

¹⁹⁸ A[a]ron Steinberg, 'Our Cultural Prospects', *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 2-4; Steinberg, 'The Ignorant and the Am-Hooretz', *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 2-3.

¹⁹⁹ Steinberg, 'The Ignorant and the Am-Hooretz', *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952): 2-3.

²⁰⁰ 'Activities [...] [i]n the Freeland Youth League', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 24; 'Jewish Culture in America' [Youth symposium report], *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 18. Territorialist Shalom Goldberg also agreed that Jewish life would be divided over three locales: Palestine, the Diaspora and a Territorialist "national territory": Shalom Goldberg, 'Economic Emancipation for the Jew', *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 9-12.

²⁰¹ A.o.: 'In The Press', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 13-14; Zalman Yefroikin [educational director of the Workmen's Circle], 'The I.L. Peretz Schools of the Workmen's Circle', *Freeland* 8, no. 10 (April-May 1955): 6-7.

engaged with Jewish religious affairs than it had been during its pre-war European days. Religion was certainly not to be enforced in the Territorialist settlements in the way the Freelanders found it was being done in Israel.²⁰²

Nonetheless, the Freeland League's growing preoccupation with the preservation of Jewishness made some sort of engagement with Jewish tradition unavoidable. Such engagement was mostly achieved by discussing religion as an aspect of Jewish *cultural* heritage.²⁰³ In turn, Yiddish culture had religiously moralising responsibilities as well.²⁰⁴ Interestingly, in 1955, the editors of *Freeland* described their movement as "the way" for both deeply religious and freethinking groups.²⁰⁵ This reasoning shows the persistence of the interwar Territorialist attachment to the compatibility between tradition and modernity.

The American-Jewish context in which Territorialism was now mainly active increased the urgency to explicitly address religious matters. On the one hand, religion was seen as counterproductive to the establishment and preservation of Jewish culture. Goodman uttered his concerns about American Jews defining themselves merely as a religious group rather than as a national minority. After all, he argued, Jews as a group had both spiritual and physical needs.²⁰⁶ On the other hand, a decrease in the religiousness of American Jews generated worries as to the future of Judaism in the U.S. The Territorialists published several articles dealing with these challenges.²⁰⁷ Similar to Zionist ideology, the Territorialists saw a solution in merging traditional Jewish thought and way of life with the concept of secular nationalism or national identity. If successful, then Territorialism could offer a new form of Jewish faith to the modern secular Jew.²⁰⁸

²⁰² Fruchtbaum, 'An Evaluation Of Territorialism', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 5-6.

²⁰³ An example of such an evaluation of the Jewish religious past in a cultural framework is Rabbi Litvin's article about the famous Lithuanian Volozhin Yeshiva: Rabbi J. Litvin, 'About A Seat Of Learning', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 13-14.

²⁰⁴ L. Bayon, 'People, Education, And Morality', *Freeland* 8, no. 12 (Nov.-Dec. 1955): 4-6; Israel Knox, 'Statehood Or Peoplehood', *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 4.

²⁰⁵ 'In The Freeland League', *Freeland* 8, no. 10 (April-May 1955): 10-12; A. Schwebel, 'We Fight For Our Future', *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 2-3.

²⁰⁶ Saul Goodman, 'Territorialism, Autonomy, Nationhood', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 9-10: 9.

²⁰⁷ For example: James G. McDonald, 'A Call to Jewishness. Summary of a Speech Made At Torah Conference Thursday, December 13th, 1945', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 11-12; Saul Goodman, 'The Faith of a Jewish Secularist', *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec 1946): 8, 18. Concerns about the lack of Jewish formation of American Jews persisted into the 1950s: 'Twenty-Seven Per Cent' [only 27% of the Jewish-American children received Jewish education], *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 1.

²⁰⁸ 'Freeland in Mexico', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 14.

Persistent anti-Semitism

Due to this idealism regarding the future of the Jewish Diaspora, the central focus of the Territorialist endeavours slowly shifted from political to cultural work.²⁰⁹ After May 1948, Steinberg saw the State of Israel as posing the most important challenge to Territorialism. The new Jewish state had inspired a decline in “moral perspective” of many Jewish leaders. Exclusivity rather than universalism, militarism, and an active denial of the European Jewish past were key elements of Israel’s policy that Steinberg considered to be the main reasons for these growing moral defects in world Jewish leadership. These same leaders also seemed to feel that parts of their cultural responsibilities had now been transferred to the young state. All these developments had led to a deterioration of Jewish cultural life and it was the Freeland League’s task to find a way out of this worrying situation.²¹⁰ Assimilation posed another danger, especially in the U.S.²¹¹ The Freelanders were concerned that other Jewish organisations dealing with the post-war Jewish immigration problem might demand an adjustment on the part of the immigrants. This adjustment might compromise the cultural heritage of these Jews.²¹²

A third important threat that the Diaspora needed to deal with was continued anti-Semitism. In 1956, Israel Knox reflected on Territorialism’s relevance. A practical Territorialist settlement might never be created,

[b]ut to some one like me, a student of Jewish organizations and philosophies, it does not matter, because to me the great significance of a group like the *Freeland League* would be this: it is a group with a *regulative* ideal which serves as a corrective to the actuality in Jewish life. Its very existence is a criticism of *what is* on behalf of *what ought to be*.²¹³

The remnants of Jewish Diaspora life faced grave challenges: “The war has left a trail of sorrow and desolation in Europe. The once flourishing Jewish communities have turned into vast cemeteries without graves or monuments. Across the graveyard that is Europe,

²⁰⁹ Jacques Calmy (co-Editor *La Terre Retrouvee* and editor *Le Bilau Jaffa*) to Leftwich, 27 October 1951, CZA A330/153

²¹⁰ ‘In The Press’, *Freeland* 8, no. 9 (Nov.-Dec. 1954): 10.

²¹¹ ‘Freeland League Intensifies and Expands Activities’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 9; ‘The “Kiss Of Assimilation”’, *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 1, 17.

²¹² ‘Resolutions Adopted By Conference’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 10.

²¹³ Israel Knox, ‘Statehood Or Peoplehood’, *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 4.

wander the pitiful survivors—one and a half million Jews, miraculously saved from the greatest orgy of hate and destruction.” These Jews could not return to their former homes, “where the soil ran with the blood of their nearest kin—where they will live in constant terror of a renewal of the sufferings they remember so well—where every economic or political upheaval will again make them the first victims[.]” Countries were “reluctant to part with their petty obsolescent immigration laws”, and Palestine had become the object of international power politics. Therefore, a land “free from political complications within and without” was a necessity, not only for Jewish refugees, but—and here the Freelanders used language that may have been particularly problematic for the Zionist observer—as a *permanent* solution to Jewish homelessness.²¹⁴

There was to be no real future for the Jewish people in their dispersion. The main reason for this hopeless situation was the fact that Jews in Europe were still “exposed to a ruthless anti-Semitism and the threat of physical extinction”. Already during the war, Herwald asked rhetorically whether Jews thought “that the antagonism to the Jew will cease when hostilities are over, and that the remnants of the persecuted Jews of Europe should help to build up a destructed Europe and be again the scapegoat of bad governments”. The answer was obviously “no”.²¹⁵

Further developing such pessimism, in 1945, *Freeland* quoted philosopher Hannah Arendt’s famous article ‘The Jew as Pariah’: “Today the truth has come home: there is no protection in heaven or earth against bare murder, and a man can be driven at any moment from the streets and broad places once open to all.”²¹⁶ Arendt roused Jews to political action *as Jews*, and in doing so had the Zionist project in Palestine in mind (although she had reservations regarding the merits of full Jewish sovereignty).²¹⁷ As Gil Rubin points out, for Arendt the danger for Jews lay in their statelessness and not in their

²¹⁴ Freeland League Poster ‘We demand a Free Land for Homeless Jews. What we testified before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry’, text taken from *New York Post* (8 February 1946), YIVO RG682/600. A pessimistic view of post-war Jewish life in Europe was recurrent in Freeland’s own publications. For instance: Steinberg, ‘Facing Realities’, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 1-2.

²¹⁵ T.B. Herwald, ‘Solution of the Jewish Problem’ (ITO Pamphlet no. 8), January 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 1. *Freeland* published several negative assessments of the prospects for Jews in Europe, and even in the U.S., in the face of persistent anti-Semitism: ‘From Our Point of View’, *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945): 14-15; Shalom Goldberg, ‘Economic Emancipation for the Jew’, *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 9-12; ‘From Our Point of View: Passing of a Culture’, *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 4.

²¹⁶ Hannah Arendt, “The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (1944): 121; quoted in: ‘Europe’s uprooted people’, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 14-15: 15.

²¹⁷ Raluca Munteanu Eddon, “Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt and the Paradox of “Non-Nationalist” Nationalism,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (2003): 55.

assimilation, which she believed was no longer possible anyway.²¹⁸ By contrast, the Territorialists, although clearly agreeing with Arendt's basic pessimistic premises, saw Jewish homelessness rather than statelessness as the main crux. Also, they did think that assimilation—or at least a growing detachment from Jewish tradition—was a problem, especially in the North American context.

The 1946 Kielce pogrom was a painful demonstration of this observation, as was the continued presence of Jewish DPs for whom no real solution was found. *Freeland* bitterly concluded that even though the war had ended, the Nazi project of the extinction of the Jews had not:

A visitor from Mars, or one from some uncivilized waste on our globe, would undoubtedly find it inconceivable that a society capable of harnessing the energy dormant in the atom should also place such little value on the human life. Evidence that the Jews of Europe continue to be pawns in the past[.]time of power politics is overwhelming. Whether the ghosts of Hitler and Company are stoking furnaces in some Dantelike inferno or singing choruses of the Horst Wesel song with Brunnehilde and Loki, they are probably laughing gleefully, taking time out to pat each other on the shoulder and offer congratulations, because up until now the real victory has been theirs despite the military defeat.²¹⁹

The British Guiana proposal was therefore not simply meant as a plan to settle Jewish refugees, but as “a much larger scheme to settle the Jewish problem”.²²⁰ After all, it was to be expected that not just the Jewish DPs, but a total of about 500,000 individuals would eventually want to leave Europe.²²¹ In 1946, 10,000 Rumanian Jews petitioned the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine, asking it to consider their wish to leave Europe for an empty land, anywhere in the world.²²²

²¹⁸ Gil Rubin, "From Federalism to Binationalism: Hannah Arendt's Shifting Zionism," *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 3 (2015): 397, 408.

²¹⁹ "There Are Real Possibilities. Statement of the Freeland League", *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 3-4, 19: 4.

²²⁰ Herwald to H.F. Davies (for Viscount Cranborne, British Guiana Department, Colonial Office), 26 June 1942, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

²²¹ "There Are Real Possibilities. Statement of the Freeland League", *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 3-4, 19: 3.

²²² Leo Steinberg, 'Rumania's 10,000 Voices', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May-June 1947): 8-11; 'Freeland League In Europe Reports: Rumania', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 3, 7; *Frayland* (Jassy 1947).

European Jews thus urgently wanted to leave Europe.²²³ The Freelanders amongst them wrote: “The flowering of anti-Semitism in the whole world has proved that even the blood of our children is powerless to quench a hatred which reason can neither comprehend nor justify.”²²⁴ The Polish Territorialists added: “The words ‘Europe’ and ‘Poland’ sound the same as before. But for Jewry there no longer is a Poland. Polish Jewry will continue to exist only in a Freeland of its own. In the soil of Poland we will not strike roots again.”²²⁵

In 1948, *Freeland* reported an increase of anti-Semitism in the German U.S.-zone. What remained of European Jewry needed to be moved quickly as a coherent group to a new locale and not through individual immigration, “for you do not drain a river by sucking at it with a straw”.²²⁶ The destination for these Jews would lie in the non-Western world. This might even be preferable to a Western location: Polish Territorialist M. Balberyski wrote that he would have preferred to see his family survive in the so-called uncivilised world, “rather than among ‘highly civilized’ nations, and under the technologically flawless Gestapo machine.” Schaechter added from Vienna: “We are sick of the ‘civilized’ nations.”²²⁷

As the East-West boundaries created by the Cold War became ever more apparent, the limitations placed on the lives of Jews behind the Iron Curtain posed a new threat to Jewish existence. This too, then, became an argument in favour of the continued relevance of Territorialism. (Former) Freelanders such as Joseph Leftwich laboured on behalf of Jewish writers in the Soviet Union. In 1962, *Freeland* reported on what it called the “cultural genocide against Jews” in Russia.²²⁸ The Freeland League had a reason to exist, Fruchtbaum wrote in 1968, as long as there were Jewish immigrants in the world.²²⁹

Even American Jews were not safe from anti-Semitism. In fact, Territorialists signalled a deterioration of the societal climate in the United States. They recorded not only directly anti-Jewish feelings and actions, but also observed a general lack of tolerance for minorities such as Afro-Americans and Mexicans: “There are the seeds [of

²²³ *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): back page. *Freeland* printed letters from European Jews expressing their hopes that a Territorialist place of settlement, preferably Surinam, would materialise: ‘What Our Homeless Say’, *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 14-15.

²²⁴ Leaflet ‘Freeland League. URGENT’, [1947], YIVO RG682/600.

²²⁵ Letter in *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May-June 1947): 11.

²²⁶ *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): back page; “Why the D.P.S Can’t Wait”, *Freeland* II, no. 2 (May 1948): 7.

²²⁷ ‘Left-Handed Zionism’, *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 8-12: 11.

²²⁸ ‘Cultural Genocide Against Jews’, *Freeland* 16, no. 2 (Oct. 1963): 2.

²²⁹ Fruchtbaum, ‘Freeland’, *Freeland* 21, no. 1 (June 1968): 7.

hatred] and there are the people who spread the fertilizer.” This made for a society in which there might not be a place for Jews in the long run: “It might surprise you [American Jews] when you find out how many organizations are devoted to your welfare—and how many more are concerned with your downfall.”²³⁰ The majority of Jews in the world after the Shoah lived in the United States, and “for this majority there remain the same needs which gave birth to Territorialism and to Zionism in the Russian and European Jewries prior to the first World War. Land, a national Jewish territory, becomes with each day a greater must for us in the American Jewish group”.²³¹ American Jewish youth should be prepared to settle on the land, as they might in due time face the same faith as their European co-religionists.²³²

According to Steinberg more than just an inward-looking, traditional, diasporic Judaism was necessary to redeem the Jewish people after the Holocaust:

The Jewish catastrophe cannot be overcome by traditional means alone. The great disaster in our life must yield new and creative remedies. No dogmatic stubbornness and no fanatic love of doctrine ought to stay in the process of sincere, deep thinking about our fate. We want not only to survive, but to go on and on in our historic march towards the ideals of Judaism and Humanity.²³³

To achieve this goal, Jews should not “shrink from great decisions” such as a Territorialist one.²³⁴ But Steinberg also did not want anti-Semitism to become a driving force, nor did he want external help based on the Jewishness of the schemes: “Jewry’s first duty [...] is not to fear anti-Semitism. Its second is not to look for *philo-Semitism*. The subconscious

²³⁰ M[achbi] Y. D[obkin], *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 7-8, 12. See also: ‘From Our Point of View: On Discrimination’, *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 6-8, 18: 8.

²³¹ A. Glantz, ‘It Must Be Now!’, *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 9-13: 13.

²³² A. Glantz, ‘Here And Over There’, *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 11-12. Nonetheless, it would also be harmful to cultivate a persecution complex: Machbi Y. Dobkin, ‘Our Misguided Messiahs’, *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 4. Dobkin and the American author Paul Eldridge disagreed on this point and publicly discussed it on the pages of *Freeland*. Whereas Eldridge claimed that Jews in the post-Shoah world could rely on no one but themselves, Dobkin still believed in cooperation with Christians. In addition to the mentioned article, see also Eldridge reply and Dobkin’s reaction to this reply in ‘Letters’, *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 18-19.

²³³ Steinberg, ‘Facing Realities’, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 1-2.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

search for a pro-Jewish sentiment in the outsider brings an unnatural nervousness into the relations between Jew and non-Jew.”²³⁵

Despite this caution on Steinberg's part, the recent experiences of the Shoah did evoke the sympathy of outside observers. In 1947, Steinberg corresponded about the possibility of a settlement in Alaska with Warner Gardner, Assistant Secretary in the U.S. Department of the Interior. Gardner agreed that “the persons whom you hope to aid can more readily make their way in the Alaskan territory if they are nourished by the cultural and spiritual strength found in a community made up of those of the same faith and with the same agonizing background of experience.” In the long term, however, he could not see how the settlement would remain purely Jewish, as this would be against the U.S. policy of ethnic assimilation. Therefore, Gardner could only encourage a small, experimental colonisation of 1000 individuals, obviously not enough to satisfy the Territorialist ambitions.²³⁶

Place, Space, Science and Trends

In the summer of 1944, Steinberg predicted the challenges that the unclear post-war world order would pose to both Jews and non-Jews: “It is useless to deny that the clearer the light of peace appears on the dark horizon, the more obscure becomes the shape of the new world.”²³⁷ The Freelanders believed that Jewish life could only be truly rebuilt outside Europe, where anti-Semitism had not yet polluted the general opinion. This new life would work in a relatively unpopulated area, through concentrated colonisation with cooperative methods, rather than just through migration, as the American Jewish Committee had proposed at the 1945 San Francisco Conference.²³⁸

The war years had created a geopolitical situation that offered new opportunities for Territorialism. Herwald already anticipated this in 1943: “A united Jewish front can only be achieved when a solution to the Jewish Problem is found, and that is the resettlement of the Jewish people on a large empty territory which the nations of the

²³⁵ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 106.

²³⁶ Copy letter Warner W. Gardner to Steinberg, 23 January 1947, YIVO RG264, Box 1. For more on the Freeland League and Alaska see Steinberg, ‘Alaska’, *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 4-5; A. Nevelstein, ‘We Can use Alaska’, *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 13,19.

²³⁷ Steinberg, ‘Free Land and Free People’ [reprinted from *Oifn Shvel*], *Freeland* (August 1944): 7.

²³⁸ Steinberg, ‘Colonization versus Migration’, *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945): 3-4; Ada Siegel, ‘For a Jewish Cooperative Settlement in the United States’, *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945): 5-6; Steinberg, ‘The Way Of Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 2-4: 3.

world must reserve for us when the redistribution of land takes place.” As mentioned before, Normal Angell pointed out that this would also benefit the non-Jewish world, as a Jewish settlement would offer counterweight to the rise of new non-Western powers such as China, Japan, India and the Soviet Union. In 1946, Steinberg asked the Anglo-American Committee: “At this crucial moment of history when all the great questions must be settled somehow, isn’t it possible to bring them together,—the countries which are in search of population and the populations that are in search of land?”²³⁹

As we have seen, during the interwar years, the concept of “empty space” in a colonial setting gained special significance both in larger geopolitical debates and discourse and for Territorialism more specifically. The general tendency was a preference for homogeneous countries. By the end of the Second World War, both border alterations and population transfers had become accepted means to achieve this end. The transfers that were suggested at the Potsdam Conference during the summer of 1945 were first and foremost targeted at Europe’s German minorities in the new Central European nation-states.²⁴⁰ This model became appealing for the solving of other minority issues as well. The Freeland League thought in line with these convictions and successfully employed related arguments to gain supporters.²⁴¹ For instance, American politician and diplomat Sumner Welles, who actively propagated boundary alterations and population transfers in Europe, officially endorsed the Freeland work.²⁴² The Freelanders realised that the “emptiness” of potential settler territories was a relative concept. Every suitable piece of land most probably already had some inhabitants. In this light, what was crucial

²³⁹ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 6.

²⁴⁰ Matthew Frank, “Reconstructing the Nation-State: Population Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-8,” in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch, Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 27, 34, 41-2.

²⁴¹ See for instance Ethel Brodsky, ‘Redistributing the World’s Populations’ (condensed from *Oifn Shvel*), *Freeland* (August 1944): 9-10; L. Glan[t]z writes about Australia’s “Empty Spaces” in his article ‘Voice of Labor’, *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 18. See also Solomon F. Bloom, ‘The Future of the Small Community’, *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945): 9-10. Matthew Frank differentiates between the post-war concept of “population transfers” and other “coerced” population movements such as deportation and expulsion. “Population transfer” is not an anachronism, but used by contemporaries, in contrast to “ethnic cleansing”, a term which has been projected backwards since it gained scholarly popularity with the Yugoslavian wars of the 1990s. Population transfers had acceptable moral outcomes, such as establishing or sustaining peace and offering the population(s) in question a better life and future: Frank, “Reconstructing the Nation-State,” 29, 31; Matthew Frank, *Expelling the Germans: British Opinion and Post-1945 Population Transfer in Context* (Oxford /New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8-9. Following this logic, population transfers were desirable to most Territorialists.

²⁴² Frank, *Expelling the Germans*, 75; Steinberg to judge Joseph M. Proskauer (president of the American Jewish Committee), 23 February 1945, YIVO RG366/73; ‘Sumner Welles on the Future of Refugees’, *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 12.

was the *sparseness* of this population,²⁴³ and perhaps there would still be such options within the UN framework.²⁴⁴

The post-war period did not present a “clean slate” on which an entirely new world order could be designed. As Or Rosenboim has shown in her analysis of the works of two important but marginalised geopolitical thinkers, entirely different and even opposing attitudes regarding the future of colonialism could exist in the same intellectual and professional sphere of policymaking, and even lead to similar policy advice. The clearest choice that existed on the geopolitical level, Rosenboim argues, was between pluralistic regionalism and a universalism coupled with a solid state-centred division of space. In the post-war reality, the latter option was victorious.²⁴⁵ Territorialist history problematises this bifurcated image of the geopolitical situation in the immediate post-war period: while appealing to universalist language—as Territorialism had always done—the Freelanders also defied the new adagium that states be homogeneous and centralised with their ambition to create a more or less autonomous minority settlement. Moreover, they imagined this settlement to be located on colonial territory, while also increasingly paying lip-service to post-colonial rhetoric and sentiments.

Agro-industrial settlements

The Territorialist preoccupation with empty but arable land made Steinberg exclaim about the Kimberley district: “But this land is not dead! [...] Let but the hands of science and experience, impelled by the will and determination of Jewish labour, awaken this dormant earth!”²⁴⁶ A scientific approach was considered crucial, but it needed a human (and more precisely: Jewish) presence as well: “[w]ith all our deference to science, countries are not built by dry calculations alone. There must be imagination and courage.” Colonisation was first and foremost “an enterprise of the human spirit”.²⁴⁷

As demonstrated, there was no consensus amongst the Territorialists regarding the cultural or religious make-up of their settlement. They did have a clear idea about its social structure: it was to be based on agro-industrial principles, preferably

²⁴³ Boris Raptshinsky, ‘The Guianas Are The Territory’, *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 5-7, 19: 5-6.

²⁴⁴ Freeland League Poster ‘We demand a Free Land for Homeless Jews. What we testified before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry’, text taken from *New York Post* (8 February 1946), YIVO RG682/600.

²⁴⁵ Or Rosenboim, ‘Geopolitics and Empire: Visions of Regional World Order in the 1940s,’ *Modern Intellectual History* 12, no. 2 (2015): 357, 361-2, 380.

²⁴⁶ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 19, 21.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 28-9.

cooperative,²⁴⁸ as “[c]ity-bred housewives will probably prefer this arrangement”.²⁴⁹ Despite the Territorialists’ criticism of the Zionist project in Palestine, the “halutz” or settler mentality and achievements served as inspiration.²⁵⁰ The remarkable achievements of the *yishuv* had convinced also the non-Jewish world of the Jews’ agricultural merits.²⁵¹ Jews had to be re-educated to “return to the soil”,²⁵² as “[w]e cannot everywhere and forever swim on the economic surface of a country, without being rooted in the soil”.²⁵³ The “industrial” element of the Territorialist agro-industrial scheme was also crucial, as only this would allow the Territorialist settlement to become more than just a farming project.²⁵⁴ At the same time, pure industrialisation was a “world craze”.²⁵⁵ In sum, an *agro-industrial* scheme would provide settlers with a choice, even if the settlement would, at least initially, limit their freedom of movement through provisions for “territorial stability”.²⁵⁶

Other Jewish agricultural work was also praised, such as in the U.S.²⁵⁷ and more specifically in New Jersey. The latter example showed the value of “chain settlement” in case concentrated settlement turned out to be unattainable.²⁵⁸ As late as 1954, one Territorialist author also referred to the settlement activities in Argentina as a prime

²⁴⁸ The FAO advised this cooperative approach: ‘The FAO and the Commission’s Report’, *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 16-17. See also Henri(c)k F. Infield, (director Group Farming Research Institute Inc., Poughkeepsie, NY), ‘The Role of Cooperation in the Surinam Settlement’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 6-7; letter from Henri(c)k F. Infield: ‘On the Tasks of the “Freeland” Magazine’: ‘Letters to the Editors’, *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952); ‘Gleanings From The Press’: ‘Cooperative Living’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 16; ‘The Freeland League Memorandum to President Truman’s Com[m]ission on Immigration’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 11-12; Henri(c)k F. Infield, ‘Land Selection for Cooperative Settlements’, *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 5.

²⁴⁹ A. Schwebel, ‘We Fight For Our Future’, *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 2-3.

²⁵⁰ Shalom Goldberg, ‘Economic Emancipation for the Jew’, *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 9-12; Boris Raptshinsky, ‘The Guianas Are The Territory’, *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 5-7, 19: 5; Fruchtbaum, ‘An Evaluation Of Territorialism’, *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 5-6.

²⁵¹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 186.

²⁵² ‘Report of the First Freeland Conference (Held in New York City on November 23rd and 24th, 1946)’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 13-15: 14.

²⁵³ ‘Gleanings From The Press’, *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 16; A. Schwebel, ‘We Fight For Our Future’, *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 2-3.

²⁵⁴ Ada Siegel, ‘Trends in Migration’, *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 4-6: 4-5; Steinberg, ‘Freeland Ways in America’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 2-3.

²⁵⁵ ‘In The Freeland League’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 16.

²⁵⁶ ‘The Freeland League Memorandum to President Truman’s Com[m]ission on Immigration’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 11-12.

²⁵⁷ ‘The Other Voice Of Israel’: ‘Man And Agriculture’, *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 7-8; Steinberg, ‘Freeland Ways in America’, *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 2-3; Theodore Norman [Managing Director of the Jewish Agricultural Society], ‘New Vitality In American Jewish Farming’, *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954): 7-8.

²⁵⁸ Charlotte Schaechter, ‘On The Jewish Agricultural Scene’, *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 11-12: 12.

example of spiritual renaissance through physical renaissance.²⁵⁹ Arguments in favour of the qualities of Jews as farmers were reiterated throughout the Freeland League's publications, often relying on statements by non-Jewish authorities in the field.²⁶⁰ "The Jew", claimed Steinberg in an outburst of Tolstoyism, wanted nothing more than to return to "Nature" after centuries of forced city-dwelling.²⁶¹ The DP Territorialists in Bergen-Belsen even developed plans to set up their own training farm.²⁶² The Freelanders shared this focus on agriculture with the members of the binationalist movement Ihud, who also idealised the Arab Palestinian's role in working the land.²⁶³ Agriculture was to remain central to the Freeland League's interests until the end of its existence.²⁶⁴

Isaiah Bowman

In dealing with the challenges of an increasingly "land-hungry world",²⁶⁵ geographers, demographers, sociologists, and other scientists played a crucial role in the new "science of space",²⁶⁶ and "demographic engineering".²⁶⁷ While following geopolitical trends, the Freeland League relied on studies and opinions of such specialists and often reprinted them in their periodicals.²⁶⁸ Of all these specialists, Isaiah Bowman, president of the Johns Hopkins University, was probably the most influential one.

Bowman had been at the forefront of what he himself termed the "science of

²⁵⁹ J.G., 'A Word From The Argentine', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 12.

²⁶⁰ 'From Our Point of View: Return To the Soil', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 5.

²⁶¹ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 113-4.

²⁶² 'Freeland Activities', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May-June 1947): 19.

²⁶³ Marcella Simoni, "'Hello Pacifist': War Resisters in Israel's First Decade," *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, no. 5 (2013): 92. For an exploration of the völkist origins of Ihud's predecessor Brit Shalom's ideology see Maor, "Moderation." According to Maor it was the movement's revolt against liberal statehood and its embrace of illiberal materialism that allowed for an attachment to the land that would be inclusive to the Arab presence. See esp. pp. 94, 80.

²⁶⁴ Fruchtbaum, 'The American Jewish Farmer and The Jewish Agricultural Society', *Freeland* 23, no. 1 (64) (Spring 1971).

²⁶⁵ Walter Murdoch (Chancellor of the University of Perth, Australia), 'Let's Give Our Emotions A Holiday', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945).

²⁶⁶ Brian W. Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization in the Twentieth Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 46-56.

²⁶⁷ Antonio Ferrara, "Eugene Kulisher, Joseph Schechtman and the Historiography of European Forced Migration," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, no. 4 (2011): 739.

²⁶⁸ For instance: E.J.K. (an "eminent Dutch engineer"), 'How To Settle Jews in Surinam', *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 9-11; Dr. Stephen Tausig [specialist in Animal Husbandry], 'Planting a New Community', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 7-8; 'The FAO and the Commission's Report', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 16-17; Henri(c)k F. Infield, (director Group Farming Research Institute Inc., Poughkeepsie, NY), 'The Role of Cooperation in the Surinam Settlement', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 6-7; letter from Henri(c)k F. Infield: 'On the Tasks of the "Freeland" Magazine' : 'Letters to the Editors', *Freeland* 6, no. 4 (April-May 1952); Henri(c)k F. Infield, 'On Planning Cooperative Settlements', *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 2-3.

settlement".²⁶⁹ After the conclusion of the First World War, he accompanied President Wilson to the Versailles peace conference. There, he was closely involved in the process of determining the post-war order of states and populations, while being at all times heavily invested in the development of the United States' mission as a global leader.²⁷⁰ After the Evian Conference in 1938, President Roosevelt commissioned Bowman with the task of recommending settlement options for Jews in uninhabited or sparsely inhabited regions in the world.²⁷¹ By the late 1930s, the geographer had become rather sceptical about global colonial settlement schemes, and perhaps partly driven by anti-Zionist and even anti-Semitic considerations, he concluded that most suitable areas were located in Central and South America rather than in Palestine. At the same time, he also mentioned the huge difficulties Jewish settlements in those other areas would encounter.

Despite these reservations, Bowman did entertain various ideas about Jewish settlement. In late 1938, supported by Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, Bowman suggested Angola, which had already featured on the ITO-list of locations before the First World War. Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar was not interested and the plan came to naught. Nonetheless, the following year, Bowman corresponded with George Warren of the U.S. President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees about Jewish settlement options.²⁷²

During the Second World War, Bowman's Jewish settlement project became the M(igration)-Project led by Henry Field. The M-Project was supposed to lead to the creation of an International Settlement Agency to supervise future large-scale settlement projects. Joseph Schechtman, still propagating population transfers—in the words of his colleague Eugene Kulisher "the latest fad in European policy"—was also involved in this project.²⁷³ However, by 1945, President Truman was no longer interested in continuing the M-project and nothing more came of it apart from the over 600 studies that had been

²⁶⁹ Lorenzo Veracini, "'Settler Colonialism': Career of a Concept," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 2 (2013): 314-5.

²⁷⁰ Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization*, 54; Rosenboim, "Geopolitics and Empire," 359.

²⁷¹ Veracini, "'Settler Colonialism'," 314-5.

²⁷² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 186-7; Jansen, *Het Madagascar Plan*, 243; Loeffler, "'The Conscience of America'," 419-20. Isaiah Bowman to George L Warren (including report Desmond Holdridge, Can refugee colonies succeed in South America?), 9 January 1939, YIVO RG554, Box 1. Regarding Bowman's anti-Semitism, see also Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 246-7, 309-11, 503, n.38.

²⁷³ Ferrara, "Eugene Kulisher, Joseph Schechtman," 718, 723.

concluded during the project's existence.²⁷⁴ Even so, Bowman's career kept advancing, as he became involved in the formulation of the post-war peace organisation when he was invited to attend the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in the summer and fall of 1944.²⁷⁵

Despite the geographer's earlier anti-Zionist position, both Jabotinsky and Schechtman invoked Bowman's conclusions as proof that no other place than Palestine was suitable for Jewish immigration.²⁷⁶ Thinking along these lines, Schechtman even proposed an exchange of Palestinian Arabs and Iraqi Jews in 1949.²⁷⁷ This did not mean that Bowman himself was exclusively connected to Zionism. In 1944 and 1945, Steinberg was in regular contact with Bowman, and the Territorialist leader even mentioned the geographer as one of the most prominent supporters of the Freeland work. On his long propaganda tour to Australia, Steinberg had met Bowman's son, who had put the Freeland-leader in touch with his father. After a visit to Bowman in Baltimore in early 1944, Steinberg wrote to the geographer to express his gratitude for Bowman's advice regarding the Australia project, as well as for the fact "that we can count on you as a friend of our cause".²⁷⁸

Bowman, indeed supportive of the Freeland initiatives and willing to help with the setting up of a research committee to Australia, was at the same time cautious in his assessment of the scheme. In none of his letters did he fully endorse the plan, even when Steinberg explicitly asked for Bowman's open support.²⁷⁹ The geographer's objections to the implicitly political character of the Freeland League, if only due to its use of the word "league" in the organisation's name, may have induced Bowman's caution.²⁸⁰

Nonetheless, his involvement with Territorialism was unquestionable. Robert

²⁷⁴ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 112-5; Mark Mazower, "Reconstruction: The Historiographical Issues," in *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949*, eds. Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch, David Feldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 24. For more about Bowman, see Smith, *American Empire*.

²⁷⁵ Steinberg to Bowman, 5 August 1944, YIVO RG366/195; Henry Field, "*M*" Project for F. D. R., *Studies on Migration and Settlement* (Ann Arbor, MI 1962).

²⁷⁶ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 119.

²⁷⁷ Ferrara, "Eugene Kulisher, Joseph Schechtman," 729, 733. Shortly thereafter, Schechtman produced a study of the Palestinian refugee problem, propagating a resettlement of the refugees in the different Arab countries. This study, although vaguely sympathetic to the refugees' plight, blamed the Arab leaders, as well as the western governments' reluctance to pressure these leaders, for the perpetuation of the issue: Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Arab Refugee Problem* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952).

²⁷⁸ Steinberg to Proskauer, 23 February 1945, YIVO RG366/73 and 195; Steinberg to Bowman, 11 January 1944, YIVO RG366/195; Steinberg to Bowman, 25 January 1944, YIVO RG366/195.

²⁷⁹ Bowman to Steinberg, 25 January 1944; Bowman to Steinberg, 2 February 1944; Bowman to Steinberg, 28 March 1944; Steinberg to Bowman, 21 March 1944, all in YIVO RG366/195.

²⁸⁰ Waley Cohen to Steinberg, 28 April 1944, YIVO RG366/210.

Waley Cohen, an important Anglo-Jewish industrialist and chairman of the British Freeland League, reported to Steinberg that the geographer had spoken “very kindly” of Steinberg and had expressed his willingness to form a group to investigate the Kimberley option. Moreover, Bowman had offered to “arrange for the financing of the expedition by his group of friends who are deeply interested in all problems of settlement and especially in your Scheme”.²⁸¹ Some months earlier, Steinberg had asked the Commonwealth Government for permission to send a scientific commission to the Kimberley district, organised under Bowman’s supervision.²⁸² Later, Bowman acted as an advisor to the Freeland League during the process of forming the commission of experts sent to Surinam in 1947.²⁸³

International organisations

Some of the larger international organisations and bodies openly supported Territorialist initiatives. This support shows the concordance of Territorialism with more general trends and conventions. While still approaching representatives of individual governments, the Freeland League also increasingly sought advice from and cooperation with transnational organisations, mainly those connected to the United Nations.²⁸⁴ For instance, in 1948, a letter was sent to the first United Nations Secretary General Trygve Lie, together with a memorandum meant for the UN’s Economic and Social Council.²⁸⁵ The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) provided the Freelanders with support and practical advice,²⁸⁶ as did the Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organisation (PCIRO). In 1948, the PCIRO expressed its intention to establish a five million U.S. dollar fund, based on voluntary contributions, for large-scale settlements by selected groups of Displaced Persons in undeveloped areas. The voluntary aspect of the initiative may have impeded its success, but the intention shows the perceived validity of organised mass resettlement as a solution to the post-war refugee problem. As for Territorialism more specifically, the IRO, the follow-up organisation to the PCIRO, offered

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Steinberg to Bowman, 28 January 1944, YIVO RG366/195; Coldwell to Phelps, 22 June 1946, YIVO RG366/577.

²⁸³ Steinberg to Bowman’s son Robert Bowman, 11 January 1950, YIVO RG366/195.

²⁸⁴ ‘Report of the First Freeland Conference (Held in New York City on November 23rd and 24th, 1946)’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 13-15: 14.

²⁸⁵ Freeland League to Trygve Lie, 16 July 1948, YIVO RG682/510; Freeland League Memorandum to the UN Economic and Social Council, 16 July 1948, YIVO RG682/600.

²⁸⁶ ‘FAO Supports Freeland Project’, *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 1; ‘The FAO and the Commission’s Report’, *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 16-17.

to finance the transportation of the future immigrants to a Territorialist settlement. It also promised to donate two million U.S. dollars if the Freeland League raised a similar sum.²⁸⁷

The (PC)IRO's willingness to cooperate with the Freeland League was probably partly due to its own failure to find new homes for the Jewish DPs. In June 1948, the organisation concluded that the achieved result of 21,500 resettled Jews in the first nine months of its existence fell far short of expectations.²⁸⁸ Therefore, the resettlement branch of the PCIRO was interested in participating in the Freeland-project in Surinam if a final agreement with the Dutch and Surinamese government would be reached.²⁸⁹

The Territorialists were aware that much of their success depended on how large international bodies viewed resettlement on the basis of ethnically defined principles.²⁹⁰ They even hoped that the UN might (co-)finance such a scheme through an international loan.²⁹¹ It was in the Freeland League's interest to show the world that other Jewish and non-Jewish organisations thought along similar lines, making the Territorialist plans part of a natural course of action.²⁹² On 15 July 1946, the British Colonial Secretary officially stated the British interest in the Territorialist project, if it was to be backed up by other "responsible Jewish authorities". Steinberg replied to Whitehall that such bodies were surely interested, but he failed to specify which these would be.²⁹³

The Freelanders were especially pleased when Norwegian politician Finn Moe openly endorsed the British, French, and especially the recent Dutch and Surinamese willingness to negotiate with the Freeland League. Moe expressed this opinion at the first special session on Palestine of the UN Political and Security Committee on 7 May 1947. For the Territorialists this was welcome support for their conviction that the problem of

²⁸⁷ UN Information Center Geneva, Excerpts from IRO-announcements, 2 February 1948, YIVO RG366/23; Fruchtbaum, Report for the Second Freeland Convention, 1948, YIVO RG366/167; Memorandum to Trygve Lie, [1948], YIVO RG682/510.

²⁸⁸ Point 19 of 'Report on the progress and prospect of repatriation, resettlement and immigration of refugees and displaced persons', submitted by the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary of the PCIRO to the UN Economic and Social Council, 10 June 1948, YIVO RG366/114 and YIVO RG682/600.

²⁸⁹ R. Innes (Director of Resettlement PCIRO) to Goodman, 23 February 1948; W.A. Wood, Jr. (Chief PCIRO) to Steinberg, 18 March 1948, both in YIVO RG366/114.

²⁹⁰ [Fruchtbaum], handwritten note, December 1951, YIVO RG682/323.

²⁹¹ Freeland League to all paying members (in English and Yiddish), [1945], YIVO RG255, Box 2; 'Voice of D.P.'s. Resolutions of the First Freeland Conference of the D.P. Camps held in Upper-Austria on October 5th, 1947. Twenty-five representatives of seven camps took part in the conference', *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 2; 'D.P. Resettlement Urged By I.R.O.', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 1, 8.

²⁹² Steinberg and Goodman to Creech Jones, 6 December 1946, YIVO RG366/121.

²⁹³ Goodman to Lessing Rosenwals (American Council for Judaism), 3 January 1947, YIVO RG366/107; Steinberg to Arthur Greenwood, 7 January 1947, YIVO RG366/572.

Palestine and the problem of Jewish homelessness were not intrinsically connected.²⁹⁴ “Who knows,” one female supporter of the Freeland League had already exclaimed in 1946, “perhaps under Freeland conditions – even Ibn Saud might be willing to concede a part of Saud[i] Arabia for this purpose! Delightful thought!”²⁹⁵

Some years earlier, the Anglo-Jewish Association had announced publicly that it would welcome any offer, from any government, of a territory on an autonomous basis for Jews who could not or would not remain in the lands in which they lived. This phrase sounded remarkably similar to the Freeland League-motto. It even included the autonomy-clause of the old ITO-days, which the Freeland League had dropped. Steinberg felt surprised and even somewhat threatened by this initiative.²⁹⁶ However, the Territorialists mostly saw the actions of non-Zionist Jewish organisations such as the AJA as supporting their own aims:

At the moment it does not matter that these individuals haven’t come around to the full implications of the Territorialist solution. What is significant, however, is the fact that together with us Freelanders they are ready to look for Jewish places of refuge which may, of necessity, lead to large scale Jewish settlements in unpopulated countries.²⁹⁷

According to the Freelanders, statements by Joseph C. Hyman, ex-vice-chairman of the American Joint Distribution Committee, and by Judge Joseph Proskauer’s and Arthur Sulzberger’s American Jewish Committee attested to the implicit Territorialist leanings of other Jewish organisations.²⁹⁸ Indeed, in 1947, the AJC even investigated the Freeland Surinam-scheme in its Immigration Commission. Steinberg rejoiced in the fact that the organisation, which before had been rather distant to the Freeland league, was now “sympathetically interested”.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ ‘Norway Endorses Freeland Policy’, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May-June 1947): 7-8.

²⁹⁵ Tehudi Menuhin to Mr. Debrest, 23 February 1946, YIVO RG366/155.

²⁹⁶ Steinberg to Waley Cohen, 28 November 1944, YIVO RG366/121.

²⁹⁷ Saul Goodman, ‘From Our Point of View: All Roads Lead to F[r]eeland’, *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 3.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Steinberg to Siegel, 4 December 1947, YIVO RG366/337; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 208. In 1955, the AJC’s executive vice-president even published an article about the AJC in *Freeland*: John Slawson, ‘American Jewish Committee’, *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 7-8.

Loss of support

Notwithstanding the popularity of the type of immigration and resettlement scheme the Territorialists proposed, the war and its aftereffects also negatively changed the attitude towards such projects. Edith Zangwill had already warned Herwald in 1943 that the Freelanders needed to move fast as “[o]nce the world is divided up again all nations will be afraid to make any further changes”. She stressed that it might be hard to find suitable land for inexperienced pioneering Jews: “There are no lands in the world to-day flowing with milk and honey, if, indeed, there ever were.”³⁰⁰

Even if available lands existed, Saul Goodman concluded, the fact that the Jews did not form a coherent body, located in one geographical place, excluded them from any population transfers.³⁰¹ Moreover, the efforts and vocabulary connected to population politics now became much more engaged with the humanitarian search for a refuge for as many people as possible, instead of casting immigration schemes in cold, scientific terms.³⁰² The Freeland League deplored this focal shift from minority rights to human rights. As Ada Siegel commented, during the Shoah, Jews had been singled out as Jews and not as individuals. In effect, in the post-war world they needed their rights as Jews protected rather than their individual rights.³⁰³ The Freelanders therefore believed that the end of minority rights protection made a “Free Land” even more urgent than before.³⁰⁴

Unfortunately for the Freeland League, countries were unwilling to open their doors to large-scale colonisation projects. Territorialism was also starting to lose its former support. In 1949, Arthur Creech Jones wrote a rather cold and belated reply to one of Steinberg’s letters. Herwald, who shortly before had named Creech Jones as a post-war Freeland enthusiast, now only received a message from the Labour politician’s secretary. Creech Jones, who had become Colonial Secretary in 1946, may have needed to act more carefully in his dealings with the Territorialists due to the appearance of the State of

³⁰⁰ Edith Zangwill to Herwald, 12 May 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³⁰¹ Saul Goodman, ‘Territorialism, Autonomy, Nationhood’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 9-10: 9.

³⁰² ‘Report of meeting held on 22nd August, 1943, to discuss Dr. I.N. Steinberg’s suggestion that steps be taken to create facilities for a mass colonization of Jews in South Africa’, 1943, YIVO RG366/587.

³⁰³ Ada Siegel, ‘The International Bill of Rights’, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 5-6. As we have seen, Steinberg would reiterate this opinion in his statement before the Anglo-American Committee.

³⁰⁴ Saul Goodman, ‘Territorialism, Autonomy, Nationhood’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 9-10: 9. The general scholarly perception of this post-war shift from minority rights protection to the focus on individual human rights is signalled in a.o. Gatrell, “Trajectories of Population Displacement,” 9. See also Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 24, 116; Ferrara, “Eugene Kulisher, Joseph Schechtman,” 730.

Israel on the international political stage.³⁰⁵ In addition to Creech Jones, Norman Angell withdrew from a planned joint project with Steinberg to create a Council for the New Era of Immigration.³⁰⁶

Trends in migration

Together with Steinberg, Ada Siegel continued to follow larger trends in migration. After all, outlets for Jews were becoming increasingly limited. The existence of the State of Israel falsely seemed to absolve the world from its responsibilities. This led to ever more rigid immigration policies, not only of Israel itself, but also of the United States. The U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, was a prime example of this.³⁰⁷

To improve this situation, during the 1950s, Steinberg corresponded with representatives of the newly established Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration (ICEM), as well as with a former UN High Commissioner for Refugees and with the U.S. Office for Refugees and Migration. In October 1952, the Freeland League submitted a memorandum to President Truman's Commission on Immigration.³⁰⁸ None of these efforts led to more than an occasional meeting with officials.³⁰⁹

Still, an increasing amount of articles in the Freeland League's periodicals was devoted to migratory issues and related geopolitical concerns.³¹⁰ Jewish migration issues were perceived as the real Jewish problem of the post-war era.³¹¹ From 1951 onwards,

³⁰⁵ Creech Jones to Steinberg, 23 March 1949, YIVO RG366/572; N.D. Watson (Secretary to A. Creech Jones) to Herwald, 2 July 1948; Herwald to Watson, 12 July 1948; Herwald to unidentified recipient, [1946], all in YIVO RG255, Box 2. These considerations were purely political and did not reflect a regained personal sympathy for Zionism on the part of Creech Jones. In the early 1960s, he recalled how the treatment of the Palestinian Arabs had made him drift away from the Zionist cause as of 1945. Quoted in Kelemen, *The British Left*, 123.

³⁰⁶ Norman Angell to Steinberg, 1 July 1950, YIVO RG682/328. Admittedly, Angell mentioned health issues as the main reason for his abandonment of the planned collaboration.

³⁰⁷ 'Back On The Agenda', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 1; 'The Freeland League Memorandum to President Truman's Com[m]ission on Immigration', *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 11-12; Ada Siegel, 'Trends In Migration', *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 16; 'Let My People Go', *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 1.

³⁰⁸ 'The Freeland League Memorandum to President Truman's Com[m]ission on Immigration', *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 11-12.

³⁰⁹ Steinberg to J. Ciechanowski (Chief US office of ICEM), 10 February 1954; J. Ciechanowski to Steinberg, 11 February 1954; Steinberg to Gerrit van Heuven Goedhart, 12 March 1954; Steinberg to Ugo Carusi (deputy director of the Office for Refugees and Migration), 10 February 1954, all in YIVO RG682/511; Steinberg, 'Freeland Ways in America', *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 2-3.

³¹⁰ 'The Refugee Remains With Us', *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 7; 'A World On The Move' *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 1.

³¹¹ Fruchtbaum, 'Freeland In Action', *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 2-3.

Siegel devoted a recurrent section of *Freeland* to '(New) Trends In Migration'.³¹² Usually, she made no explicit connection to Territorialism, but taken together, all these articles served to show that the movement fit perfectly into an accepted international discourse: schemes such as those proposed by the Freeland League still matched the agenda of world politics: "As long as the migration process continues [the Territorialist idea] too will persist."³¹³

What was more, the Territorialists were not only trend followers, but also trendsetters: Jewish history had made Jews into real migration specialists. Therefore, a field of "Jewish Geopolitics" should be developed: "We do not, of course, think of the geopolitics that contemplates the 'expansión' of state frontiers at the expense of others in order to satisfy one's own economic and social ambitions", but of a science aimed at the study of still existing underdeveloped areas in the world, "vast empty spaces" in "vital need of development", where also Jews could settle.³¹⁴ A supporter of a Freeland-initiative in Saskatchewan, Canada wrote to the Minister of Social Welfare of that province that he thought that "this is an excellent idea as this is the type of scientifically planned immigration of which I am strongly in favour".³¹⁵

The Freelanders would have liked to see one united agency on Jewish migration being formed under their leadership.³¹⁶ The creation of the United HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), a merger of several separate HIAS-branches, was already "a step in the right direction";³¹⁷ a "Jewish Council for Migration", inspired by, or as part of the work of ICEM, would be even better. In 1954, the Freeland League sent out a memorandum to several Jewish organisations with the aim of setting up such a body. The main problem of the moment was "a just redistribution of the population and the natural resources of the earth". For Jews in particular there was a growing need for "collective integrated work and long-range constructive planning": several North African countries

³¹² 'Trends in Migration' occurred in every issue as of the fall of 1951: Ada Siegel, 'New Trends In Migration', *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 13-14. See also all consecutive issues.

³¹³ Fruchtbaum, '50 Years Of Territorialism', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 7-8: 7.

³¹⁴ 'A World On The Move' *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 1; Ada Siegel, 'Trends in Migration', *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 4-6: 4-5; Steinberg, 'World Council For Jewish Migration', *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 4-5.

³¹⁵ M.J. Coldwell to J.L. Phelps (minister of social welfare, Regina, Saskatchewan), 22 June 1946, YIVO RG366/577.

³¹⁶ Fruchtbaum, 'Problems Of Jewish Migration. For A United Agency On Migration', *Freeland* 7, no. 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1953): 4-5.

³¹⁷ 'A Step In The Right Direction', *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954): 1-2. About HIAS, see also Elizabeth Ford, 'Hias In A Nutshell', *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 14-15; 'On A Startling Conference', *Freeland* 8, no. 10 (April-May 1955): 1-2; 'United Hias Service', *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 1, 6.

were approaching independence and might then oust their Jewish inhabitants, who had been culturally isolated for generations. These people therefore needed extra guidance. Moreover, the Soviet Union might in the future allow their Jewish population to emigrate. In sum, the Jewish world should be prepared for the upcoming Jewish migration challenges.³¹⁸

The Freeland memorandum was largely ignored, although during a HIAS-meeting on 5 February 1956 the formation was indeed announced of a World Jewish Migration Council. However, to the Freeland League's regret, it was not to be included in this Council, which never materialised anyway.³¹⁹ Still, Fruchtbaum mentioned the HIAS-initiative as proof of the Freeland League's influence on the Jewish scene.³²⁰ Later that year, *Freeland* reported on the HIAS-efforts to help 5,000 North African Jews migrate to Brazil. Again, the Freelanders felt themselves ignored, this time because of the HIAS-statement that the Brazil-project was the first time that such an agreement had been signed. This was an erroneous claim: the Surinam project preceded it.³²¹

The Freelanders' conviction of their own continued geopolitical relevance continued for at least two decades after the war's conclusion. This relevance, they believed, even increased due to the particular changes on the world political scene. In a 1962 article in *Freeland*, Judah Zelitch invoked president John F. Kennedy's proclamation of a "One World" idea, in which all expressions of (geo)politics are mutually affecting:

We [the Freeland League] are likewise deeply involved and duly sensitive to the tremor resulting from any political or social friction anywhere on the globe, since it tends to generate tensions which may easily get out of hand, upsetting in its wake the delicate political balance of international

³¹⁸ 'On The Jewish Wanderer', *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 2-3; Steinberg, 'World Council For Jewish Migration', *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 4-5; Ada Siegel, 'Trends In Migration', *Freeland* 8, no. 7 (May-June-July 1954): 9-10. On the (approaching) plight of North African Jewry, as compared to that of European Jews before the war, see: "'Had We Been Permitted To Know...'", *Freeland* 8, no. 9 (Nov.-Dec. 1954): 1.

³¹⁹ 'United Hias Service', *Freeland* 9, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956): 1, 6; 'United Hias Service', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 1.

³²⁰ Fruchtbaum, 'Freeland In Action', *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 2-3.

³²¹ 'Five Thousand Jews To Brazil', *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 8-9. See also Leybl Kahn, 'Trends In Migration', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 10-11. The Territorialists kept a close and critical eye on the HIAS' functioning throughout the 1960s. See for example Fruchtbaum, 'An Open Letter to "HIAS"', *Freeland* 17, no. 1 (March 1964): 5-6.

equilibrium.³²²

The persisting problem of Jewish immigration, especially behind the Iron Curtain, was a “constant irritant” influencing this world balance and should therefore be solved in the spirit of the UN way of thinking. The Freeland League could offer such solutions.³²³

Colonialism

Connected to these geopolitical debates was the rapidly changing situation in the colonial world. Colonial discourse was clearly shifting dramatically, but this did not mean colonialism was disappearing altogether: the United Nations trusteeship system was in many ways a new, albeit concealed form of (American) colonialism. The “postwar American empire” was not based on colonising practices in the traditional sense, but on the expansion of the U.S. military and naval outposts around the world.³²⁴ The colonial focus had also not disappeared from the Territorialist agenda: many of the “empty spaces” were still located within imperial settings. It was in the interest of the (colonial) governments that these areas be populated by Europeans. As in the pre-war days, the Freelanders used the argument that “[t]he Jewish migrant can, in these cases, be the most desirable element, as behind him stands no foreign power which might present political problems in the future.”³²⁵ There was also a sense of urgency, as fewer “empty lands” remained empty and unallocated. However, if anyone, then the Jews would be the ones still able to colonise in the post-war world. They had always managed to do so through “peaceful infiltration” rather than through conquest. “This unique pattern of migration of a unique people is due to the historically remarkable fact that whenever a national catastrophe visited the Jewish people some spectacular, though unforeseen, opportunity opened to those who wished to carry on the banner of liberty and maintain the inheritance of their ancestors.”³²⁶

³²² Judah Zelitch, ‘To the International Community - Jewish Migration Is Also Your Problem’, *Freeland* XV, no. 3 (December 1962). A reprint of the article can be found in: YIVO RG670.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 400-1; Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: the History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 252.

³²⁵ Freeland League to all paying members (in English and Yiddish), [1945], YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³²⁶ Francis Joseph Weiss, ‘Jewish Colonization in the Postwar World’, *Freeland* 1, no. 1 (December 1944): 7-9: 9.

Decolonisation and postcolonial realities

Even more than before the war, Steinberg was aware that an explicit demand for political autonomy would spell the immediate end of the Territorialist endeavours. This was not only due to colonial powers' anxieties of Jews creating a state within a state, but also had to be understood within a postcolonial context: "In the World at large the peoples in the Colonies have risen against the old rule." These peoples would never agree to a Jewish politically autonomous settlement on their newly independent lands, and colonial powers such as The Netherlands, France, and the U.K. were aware of this.³²⁷ Retrospectively, Leftwich wrote in 1954, this was why even Uganda would have never worked out, as was demonstrated by the recent Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya.³²⁸

These developments could turn out in favour of the Territorialists as well. At least one postcolonial voice proved Steinberg's expectation of a negative stance of newly enfranchised colonials to be too pessimistic. In 1948, *Ex-Statens van Suriname* member Johan Einaar wrote in *Freeland* in support of the Surinam scheme that the "coloured" people of Surinam needed "good leaders in race relations". The Surinamese generally felt compassion for oppressed people such as the Jews, based on their own recent experiences. Einaar was hopeful that the plan could succeed, as even if currently the population voiced critique against the Freeland plan, "their voices are not so strong as the beating of their hearts".³²⁹

Relying on similar discourse, the young American Freelanders Clement Staff presented the Freeland tactics regarding Surinam as unprecedented: local leaders were approached rather than playing matters via colonial politics. Such a bottom-up strategy had not been easy for Steinberg and his fellow-Territorialists, "and there must have been tiny secret flashes of doubt—and even a stifled longing for the simpler cast-off totalitarian formula, the colonial 'over-the-heads-of-the-people-tradition'." However, to counteract this feeling, "the committee [visiting Surinam, consisting of Steinberg, Fruchtbaum and Van Leeuwen] sought strength and balance in the conviction that this was not a 'snatch as snatch can' enterprise—that the Freeland program must rest on the keystone principle of international justice and that diversity is no bar to mutual trust and

³²⁷ Steinberg, 'Political Negotiations and Prospects', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 4, 16: 4. The question of political autonomy remained a point of discussion in the movement and the issue was raised again at the First Freeland Conference in November 1946: 'Report of the First Freeland Conference (Held in New York City on November 23rd and 24th, 1946)', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 13-15: 14.

³²⁸ Joseph Leftwich, 'Looking Back On Territorialism', *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954): 2-4: 3.

³²⁹ Johan F.E. Einaar, 'My Country, Surinam, And Freeland', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 6.

agreement". The Freeland League activities in Surinam represented "the morality of enlightened self-interest, and the benefit that this interest effects in the field of human and international relations, when applied in a framework of faith and trust in humanity".³³⁰

The Territorialists were thus aware that the contemporary decolonisation trends demanded good relations with indigenous peoples. Also from a moral point of view, mainly propagated by Steinberg, a postcolonial approach to territorial colonisation in the colonies was desirable. A colonisation expert invited to speak at a Freeland Banquet in 1952 praised the Territorialist work for its lack of a "coolie approach".³³¹

Indeed, the end was nearing of the racist discourse that also the Territorialists had employed. Being white on non-white lands was now no longer a virtue in itself. (Steinberg's call in 1946 for "a good place for white settlers" should be seen as a purely practical criterion: white settlers were simply not used to certain climatic conditions.³³²) As Ada Siegel wrote in 1946 in one of her many critiques of the Zionist policy in Palestine: We came as "Europeans" with all the arrogance of the "white" in a colonial land."³³³

The 1955 Bandung Conference, attended exclusively by non-Western countries, served to reinforce Steinberg's heightened awareness of the new world order. This was the moment for Jews to forge relationships with the Muslim and postcolonial worlds. Unfortunately, he concluded, the chauvinistic and militaristic State of Israel was unsuited for this task. That was why other Jews should take it upon themselves to make peace with these non-Western forces, for the good of all mankind: "'Bandung' is not merely a fact; it is a challenge to us, to our sense of justice and to our understanding."³³⁴

As a result of Bandung, "the well known critical Zionist"³³⁵ Robert Weltsch, whose life and work were shortly introduced in Chapter 1, published an imaginary address to Egyptian president Nasser, one of the "stars" of Bandung. Weltsch implored Nasser to not only turn to the big powerful capitals of the West and the East, namely Washington and

³³⁰ Clement Staff, 'Freeland Headway', *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 4-5. The importance of direct negotiations with local populations of prospected territories now became one of the explicit aims of the Freeland League, as stated on the back of *Freeland* as of its last issue of 1947: *Freeland* 3, no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): back page.

³³¹ 'In The Freeland League', *Freeland* 7, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1953): 16.

³³² *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 6.

³³³ Ada Siegel, 'Palestine: The Problem', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 10, 14: 10.

³³⁴ Steinberg, 'Jews In Asia', *Freeland* 8, no. 11 (June-July 1955): 5-6. According to Fruchtbaum, Steinberg was aware of "the struggle and awakening of the Colonial Peoples, the rise of the Asians and Africans": Draft speech Fruchtbaum, 'Evaluation of Dr. I.N. Steinberg', [1957], YIVO RG682/327.

³³⁵ Steinberg, 'The Mountain Peaks', *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 9-11.

Moscow, but to find cooperation much closer to home, namely in Jerusalem.³³⁶ In the following issue, Steinberg further developed Weltsch' thought experiment. Incidentally, this was to be Steinberg's last ever contribution to *Freeland*. In this article, unprecedented in the moralism of its tone, Steinberg set out to show that a new world order had arrived. China, Moscow—despite its “sins” and problematic past still the locale of the “social-revolutionary uprising of humanity”—and Nehru's India all represented this new order. The Jewish people and the Jewish morality, in one word “Jerusalem”, were part of this new order as well.³³⁷

This “Jerusalem”, a concept rather than the actual geographical place, still had an important moral role to play in the world. It was in its forging of a non-violent traditional connection between politics and morality that the Jewish people had been unique, and not in its modern technological and military accomplishments. This fact had become obscured by the transformation of Israel into a state like any other. In this article, published just weeks before his death, Steinberg showed not only his persistent idealism and almost messianic conception of the meaning of the Jewish people, but also the legacy of his socialist-revolutionary past, merged with his religious convictions: he referred to the “piousness” of the recent Jewish revolutionary generation, which had been looking for truth and righteousness in the world.³³⁸ In all of his writings, Steinberg used “the Jewish people” and “the Freeland League” or “the Territorialists” interchangeably. By creating the suggestion that the Territorialist work was in fact the work for and by all Jews, the Freeland League became part of a larger moral mission: “The Jewish people [or: the Freeland League] will continue these efforts in the knowledge that solving the problem of its homeless goes hand in hand with the problem of humanity as a whole.”³³⁹

Territorialism and Zionism

Even more than before, the post-war Freeland League wanted to avoid the impression that it was hostile to Zionism. Its lack of explicitly political aspirations might even appeal to Zionists.³⁴⁰ The young American Freelanders were more optimistic about the

³³⁶ Robert Weltsch, ‘What I Would Say To Nasser Of Egypt’ [reprinted from *Haaretz*, 1 June 1956], *Freeland* 9, no. 3 (June-July-August 1956): 4-6.

³³⁷ Steinberg, ‘The Mountain Peaks’, *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 9-11.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 8.

³⁴⁰ Arthur Meyerowitz (NY Federation of Reform Synagogues), ‘Letter to the Editor’, *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 24. Interestingly, the following issue of *Freeland* included a rectification, stating that Meyerowitz had not intended his letter to be made public, betraying the persistent awareness amongst

possibility of creating a dialogue with Zionists than their older European colleagues had been before the war. They invited Zionists to speak at Territorialist gatherings and were themselves invited in return.³⁴¹ The Freeland Youth League organised meetings to which its “Zionist friends” were welcomed (but they also brought in as many Territorialists as possible to offer counterweight to the Zionist opinion), as well as communist, Bundist, and orthodox representatives.³⁴² The Youth League also published opposing voices in *Freeland* to demonstrate the existing dialogue between Zionism and Territorialism. Obviously, these discussions proved that Territorialism was on the right end of things.³⁴³

In a similar vein, the unidentified author of a proposal for a settlement in Tanganyika in 1948 suggested getting influential Jews on board. They would “become enlightened as to which exten[t] they should be obliged to [the] Freeland League, which systematically, under very difficult conditions, odds and insults on the part of Zionists – has prepared the whole Scheme for realisation”. These individuals would then help to convince the Zionists of the benefit of a Territorialist project for the Zionist work in Palestine.³⁴⁴

There was also explicit praise for this Zionist work. Steinberg applauded the movement’s uniqueness in that “it was not negotiated with politicians over the heads of the people, but with the full participation and approval of the local population”.³⁴⁵ Leo Steinberg argued that the *yishuv* had indeed been successful, but this only meant that more such work was needed, outside Palestine.³⁴⁶ Yiddish author Shmuel Niger urged his audience at the First Freeland Conference in late 1946 to rid their image of Palestine from any form of messianism. One should appreciate the Zionist settlement project on its own merits, free from Zionist ideology:

some Territorialist sympathisers of the strained relationship between Territorialism and Zionism: *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945): 19.

³⁴¹ Waley Cohen to Siegel, 19 February 1940, YIVO RG366/405.

³⁴² Meeting invitation for gathering 28 April 1946, dated 18 April 1946; Meeting invitation for gathering 3 December 1944, dated 29 November 1944, both in YIVO RG682/514; ‘In the Freeland League. Freeland Youth League’, *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 18-19; ‘Freeland World Outlook Convincingly Presented’, *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 4, 6.

³⁴³ Gershon Cohen, ‘A Zionist’s Observation on Freeland’, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 10; Leo Steinberg, ‘A Freelanders’ Comments on Zionist Misobservation’, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 10-12.

³⁴⁴ [Author unknown], handwritten ‘Plan of approaching Zionists with our proposed solution (Palestine plus Tanganyika)’, 8 September 1948, YIVO RG366/589.

³⁴⁵ Leaflet ‘Freeland League. URGENT’, [1947], YIVO RG682/600.

³⁴⁶ Leo Steinberg, ‘A Freelanders’ Comments on Zionist Misobservation’, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 10-12; S[aul] G[oodman], ‘From Our Point of View’, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 2, 16: 16.

As long as we look at Palestine through the eyes of the Zionists we cannot agree with them. But if we look at Palestine as to one current of Jewish life then we could have a positive attitude. We must not undertake this work for a *free land* as opponents of Zionism but as Jews, and add to those positive accomplishments which have been achieved in Palestine.³⁴⁷

Herwald realised that the Zionists would probably strongly oppose any proposal for a territory other than Palestine. Nevertheless, seeing that most Jews were not staunch Zionists, even the most convinced Palestine-focused nationalist would eventually support a good alternative plan.³⁴⁸ That every right-thinking person would eventually see the merits of the Territorialist suggestions was demonstrated when, in 1951, a Zionist-Revisionist suggested European colonies as Jewish immigration outlets. He brought back to memory the negotiations that had taken place in 1936 between Moutet and the Revisionists regarding French overseas territories. The author failed to mention that it had been the Freeland League who had opened these negotiations, but for *Freeland* the mere fact that a Zionist had mentioned alternative settlement options supported the continued legitimacy of the Territorialist ambitions.³⁴⁹

Eventually, Steinberg concluded, the more rigid selection criteria for immigration into Palestine increased the need for another Jewish centre.³⁵⁰ In due course, Territorialism and Zionism could therefore cooperate, appeasing the Arab population of Palestine in the process.³⁵¹

Zionist attacks

The Freeland League thus declared that it did not wish to pose competition to the Zionists. At the same time, in 1946, *Freeland* did state that its editors believed that the *yishuv* was not Zionism's exclusive property.³⁵² At best, when not openly acknowledging the frequent examples of animosity between themselves and the Zionists, the Territorialists placed their own movement outside of the Jewish political battlefield and presented it as a third

³⁴⁷ 'Report of the First Freeland Conference (Held in New York City on November 23rd and 24th, 1946)', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 13-15: 14.

³⁴⁸ Memorandum T.B. Herwald for ITO to Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry for Palestine, 4 February 1946, YIVO RG366/27 and YIVO RG255, Box 1.

³⁴⁹ 'A Zionist In Search Of Territories', *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 16.

³⁵⁰ Handwritten note Steinberg, 14 December 1947, YIVO RG366/337.

³⁵¹ 'Washington Testimony', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 3,4, 12-13: 4.

³⁵² 'From Our Point of View: The Crisis in Palestine', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 3-4.

way, one “that kept aloof from the conflict between Zionists and anti-Zionists”.³⁵³ “We are nobody’s enemy” [“Wir sind niemandes Feind”], one Territorialist wrote. Whoever wanted to go to Palestine should go, and whoever believed Jews should assimilate, should go ahead and assimilate. The Territorialists were not enemies of either of these opposing groups, but they were not willing to wait for them either.³⁵⁴

The Zionists were unconvinced of the Territorialists’ harmlessness to their cause and still saw them as potential enemies. From a Zionist perspective, openly supporting Territorialism implied opposing Zionism. Indeed, in his testimony before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine in 1946 Steinberg mentioned the Territorialist ambition to find a home for the 1,5 million Jews of Europe.³⁵⁵ This move did not do much good for the already problematic image the Zionists had of the Freeland League.³⁵⁶ A young Zionist, publishing in *Freeland* in 1945, pointed out the damage he believed Territorialism could potentially do to the Zionist cause. Furthermore, he claimed, Territorialism failed “to take into account the historic-cultural needs and ideals of the Jews of Europe”, which would lead them to Palestine.³⁵⁷

In Europe, the Romanian branches of several Zionist Revisionist organisations issued a joint proclamation in 1947, warning against settlement on “fantastic” territories such as New Caledonia, Madagascar and Uganda.³⁵⁸ The Jewish Democratic Party of Poland, a continuation of the Jewish People’s Party, with over 800 members in Łódź alone, openly affiliated itself with the Freeland League. Because of this, its members reported many problems with local Zionists, who denied them access to the only Yiddish printing press available.³⁵⁹

The Zionists also actively combatted the Freeland activities in the European Displaced Persons Camps. A Territorialist inhabitant of one of the camps wrote about the repeated “kacn-jomer” (cat lamentations) of the Zionists, who saw the Surinam project as

³⁵³ Steinberg to Mayer Sulzberger, 1 February 1946, YIVO RG366/349.

³⁵⁴ German text [no title] about the goals of Freeland, [no date]. YIVO RG366/519.

³⁵⁵ ‘Washington Testimony’, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 3, 4, 12-13: 3. Admittedly, Steinberg also asked for the abolishment of the White Paper to encourage more immigration into Palestine: *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 4.

³⁵⁶ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 212.

³⁵⁷ Gershon Cohen, ‘A Zionist’s Observation on Freeland’, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 10.

³⁵⁸ Letter in *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May-June 1947): 11.

³⁵⁹ Letter from M. Balbarishky [or: Balberyski/Balberyszky] and Bergman Mauritz to the Freeland League in: “Freeland” in Poland’, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May-June 1947): 12; ‘Freeland League In Europe Reports: Poland’, *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 3, 7.

a threat to Palestine.³⁶⁰ Even though it was officially denied by the camp authorities,³⁶¹ reports reached the Freeland League headquarters that non-Zionists were denied work and food packages sent by the Joint.³⁶² Zionists physically intimidated DPs who were openly interested in the Surinam project so that they would not join the local Freeland group.³⁶³ Izak Kaczerginski, the Freeland representative in the DP camp in Steyr, wrote to Freeland headquarters that his movement had consciously refrained from any open registration for DPs who were willing to go to Surinam. Nonetheless, he had been called to the local Zionist federation to publicly distance himself from what was termed the "Surinam Affair". Subsequently, the Zionists wanted the DP Freeland League to be disbanded and its members to take up the fight for Palestine. According to Kaczerginski, the Jewish Central Committee had issued an order to start a campaign against the Territorialists. He himself had been fired from his post as director of the camp registration and expected such measures to be applied soon to Freelanders in other camps as well. Kaczerginski feared that these Territorialists would be forced to leave the camps and settle in private homes, which would make it much harder for them to obtain food and clothing.³⁶⁴

As this incident shows, the Freeland League's Surinam project aroused fierce opposition from the Zionists. Interestingly, the critique voiced most strongly did not come from Dutch or Surinamese Zionists, some of whom even showed themselves sympathetic to the intentions guiding the plan.³⁶⁵ In the spring of 1948, *Freeland* discussed several attacks on the Surinam scheme by foreign Zionist journalists, who claimed to have studied the situation on the ground. In reality, they had spent only some days in the South American country. The main points that these journalists raised referred to a supposed increase of anti-Semitism in Surinam and a lack of money and immigrants for the project. The Freelanders attempted to disprove these claims: they published the replies from DP Freelanders who were eager to migrate to Dutch Guiana.³⁶⁶ Two years later, Fruchtbaum

³⁶⁰ A. Tempelman to Freeland League, 23 June 1948, YIVO RG366/106.

³⁶¹ Helen Wilson (Voluntary Agency Liaison Officer PCIRO) to Steinberg, 18 June 1948, YIVO RG366/114.

³⁶² 'Report of the Second Freeland Convention'. 9-10 October 1948, YIVO RG366/167; 'Protokol. Fun der 2-ter Landes-Konferenc, "Plejtim-Frajland-Lige, in Estrajch', 10 July 1948, YIVO RG366/529.

³⁶³ Mordkhe Schaechter, 'The Refugee Freeland League in Austria', *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 8-9: 8.

³⁶⁴ Izak Kaczerginski to Freeland League, New York, 21 May 1948, YIVO RG366/527; 'Freeland League Intensifies and Expands Activities', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 9.

³⁶⁵ 'Plan for Jewish colonization of Surinam', [1947], YIVO RG366/107.

³⁶⁶ 'Left-Handed Zionism', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 8-12: 9-10.

still fumed that one of these journalists “probably followed Hitler’s dictum that the bigger the lie, the better the chance that people will believe it”.³⁶⁷

The most active Zionist propaganda was undertaken by Ida Marcia Silverman, according to *Freeland* “a [...] devoted servant of the anti-Freeland cause”, “and an outstanding wrecker of Jewish colonization projects everywhere.”³⁶⁸ Silverman had the support of Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund) executive member Nahum Goldmann and of Rabbi Stephen Wise, who had been supportive of Steinberg’s U.S. visa-application only a few years before. After the Freeland League leader’s testimony before the Anglo-American Committee, Wise wrote a furious letter to Silverman, inciting her to take action.³⁶⁹

Even before the Surinam plan appeared on the agenda, Silverman published widely against Steinberg and his movement. In an article in *The Jewish Frontier* in March 1945, she accused Steinberg of having threatened to bring Palestinian Jews to Australia. The Freelanders saw these attacks as “character assassination” and considered legal actions against Silverman. To the Territorialists’ discontent, *The Jewish Frontier* was not willing to rectify and only stated that it had no doubt as to Steinberg’s integrity and good intentions.³⁷⁰ Silverman again resorted to the compilation of “some free variations on a theme of libel, which she promptly d[i]spatched to the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*”, after having spent three days in Surinam in March 1948. While in Paramaribo, Silverman addressed the local Jewish community, which, to the Freeland League’s contentment, seemed unimpressed. After all, Surinamese Jews, “having so far been spared the imbecilities of Jewish party politics [...] see no reason why they cannot be Zionists and Freelanders at the same time”.³⁷¹

Rovner acknowledges the damage Silverman’s actions did to the Surinam scheme, but he also believes that the fate of the proposal was already sealed due to the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948.³⁷² The Freelanders themselves did see Silverman’s actions, and the more generally implemented Zionist anti-Surinam campaign

³⁶⁷ Fruchtbaum, ‘Zionist crusaders against the Freeland Project in Surinam’, partly published in *Forward* (29-9-1950), YIVO RG682/490.

³⁶⁸ ‘Left-Handed Zionism’, *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 8-12: 9-10.

³⁶⁹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 180-1, 212-14.

³⁷⁰ ‘We Reply’, *Freeland* 1, no. 3 (April 1945): 7-8; Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 180-1, 212-14.

³⁷¹ ‘Left-Handed Zionism’, *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 8-12: 9-10.

³⁷² Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 215.

as the chief reasons why the plan was finally rejected.³⁷³ Fruchtbaum even went so far as to suggest that Zionist opposition to Territorialism had contributed to the destruction of Jews during the Shoah, by not seizing all the available opportunities to save them.³⁷⁴ Nathan Birnbaum's son Uriel uttered similar, even more extreme accusations at the end of the war.³⁷⁵ The tenth anniversary of Freeland's Yiddish periodical *Oifn Shvel* in 1951 moved one Zionist author to mockingly comment on the failure of Territorialism during the previous decade. The Freelanders responded: "We see nothing funny in the knowledge that, because there were no territories for Jewish settlement ten years ago, thousands of Jews perished in gas chambers."³⁷⁶

Later Zionist attacks show that even after the establishment of the State of Israel, Zionists still perceived Territorialism as a threat. As late as 1953, several Israeli media falsely accused Steinberg of wanting to create a Freeland branch in Israel.³⁷⁷ The following year, *Oifn Shvel* dedicated an issue to its celebration of the 50th anniversary of Territorialism. Steinberg ironically observed that the efforts the Zionists devoted to mock this "expired" Territorialism contradicted the supposed expiration itself.³⁷⁸ It is indeed striking that the Zionists cared so much about the presence of an organisation that they generally depicted as irrelevant. Even Silverman resurged as a staunch anti-Territorialist in the October 1956 issue of the *Jewish Forum*.³⁷⁹

The Freelanders thus encountered an increasingly Zionism-dominated and hostile world.³⁸⁰ Not many public figures, even if they were supportive, were willing to be labelled as anti-Zionist. German author Thomas Mann, who did publicly endorse the

³⁷³ Saul Goodman and Steinberg to Siegel, 14 September 1948, YIVO RG366/89; Judah Zelitch, 'Memorandum with advice to Freeland League about potential libel action against the Jewish Frontier', [1945], YIVO RG366/382; Fruchtbaum to Editor *Jewish Frontier*, 17 March 1945, YIVO RG682/323; Fruchtbaum to governor W. Huender, [1948], YIVO RG682/510; Izak Kaczerginski, 'Let me state it publicly', February 1949, YIVO RG682/566; '1819 Broadway' *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 1-2.

³⁷⁴ Fruchtbaum, 'Zionist crusaders against the Freeland Project in Surinam', partly published in *Forward* (29-9-1950), YIVO RG682/490.

³⁷⁵ Uriel Birnbaum to Henri van Leeuwen, 1 December 1945, YIVO RG366/358; Israeli author Shabtai Beit-Zvi voiced similar opinions in a 1977 publication: Shabtai Beit-Zvi, *Post-Ugandan Zionism on Trial. A Study of Factors That Caused the Mistakes Made by the Zionist Movement During the Holocaust* (Tel Aviv 1977/1991, Internet edition 2004).

³⁷⁶ 'What Is There To Celebrate', *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 16.

³⁷⁷ A Statement, A Radio Message And An Article, *Freeland* 7, no. 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1953): 16.

³⁷⁸ M. Leবাদin [Steinberg], 'The Jewish Press On Freeland', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 3-4. Two years later, a H. Leivick also critiqued Territorialism in *Der Tog*: 'Whence Comes Their Violence', *Freeland* 9, no. 3 (June-July-August 1956): 1, 17.

³⁷⁹ Reprint letter Steinberg to the *Jewish Forum* (published December 1956), *Freeland* 9, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec. 1956): 17.

³⁸⁰ Steinberg, 'Political Negotiations and Prospects', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 4, 16: 4.

Freeland League,³⁸¹ hosted a Territorialist fundraising gathering at his Los Angeles home on 24 November 1947. Interested guests indeed attended, but remained anonymous “for political reasons”.³⁸² Other previously non-Zionist bodies and organisations also seemed to move in the direction of Zionism. In 1944, the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA), previously favourable to Territorialism, dismissed a motion to welcome a Territorialist initiative in British Guiana.³⁸³ Herwald angrily replied that the AJA was wasting time buying land in Brazil rather than investing in a real solution to the Jewish problem.³⁸⁴ Two years later, he deplored the loss to Palestine “of more than a quarter of a million of the excellent material of emigrants which would enrich and strengthen British possession in South America, and perhaps would not have lowered the British prestige in the Middle East which is now left in the hands of the American capitalists”.³⁸⁵

After 1948, Territorialists still perceived active sabotaging on the part of the Zionists. In 1950, the Freelanders thought it very likely that Australian Zionists, already fierce opponents when the Kimberley scheme had been on the table in 1943 and 1944, had intervened to prevent further publications on the subject by an Australian daily.³⁸⁶ Moreover, in 1955, the Australian Council of Trades in Melbourne reopened the discussion about the Kimberley plan. Again, local Zionists opposed. With dramatic indignance, *Freeland* presented this fact as the first instance since Cromwell invited Jews back into England in 1665 that Jews would ask their government not to allow in other Jews.³⁸⁷

Territorialist counterattacks

After the Surinam negotiations had failed, Ada Siegel wrote to the Freeland League Executive that she preferred a counter-attack by exposing the Zionist tactics. “Well, Chaverim [friends],” she wrote, “I think you know me well enough to realise that this is much more in my nature than to bend backwards being nice to the Zionists which we have done all along.”³⁸⁸ Just before her death in 1956, Ada wrote a draft reaction paper to

³⁸¹ Thomas Mann, ‘I believe in Freeland’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 8.

³⁸² ‘Los Angeles Campaigns Yields New Groups’, *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 5.

³⁸³ S.D. Temkin (AJA) to Herwald, 9 November 1944, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³⁸⁴ Herwald to AJA, 15 November 1944, YIVO RG255, Box 2. Herwald’s angry words seemed to generate some effect, as the AJA followed up with an apologetic reply, asking for more information about the scheme: AJA to Herwald, 17 November 1944, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³⁸⁵ Herwald to unidentified recipient, [1946], YIVO RG255, Box 2.

³⁸⁶ ‘What’s In A Free Press?’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 10.

³⁸⁷ ‘Their Triumph...’, *Freeland* 8, no. 11 (June-July 1955): 1-2.

³⁸⁸ Siegel to Freeland League Executive, 15 September 1948, YIVO RG366/89.

an anti-Territorialist article that had appeared shortly before. Siegel accused the new defenders of Zionism of hypocrisy, of having “jumped on the bandwagon of [...] Medinas Isroel, because “nothing succeeds like success.”³⁸⁹ Using similar language, William Zuckerman showed himself relentless about the Zionists in his eulogy for Ada:

Unfortunately these [Ada’s Territorialist] ideals are not popular now in contemporary Jewish social life, dominated by the band-wagon of fund-raising and the glorification of statehood. Ada’s life was therefore a lone struggle for what is contemptuously dismissed by the smug and successful high priests of Campaign Judaism as a “lost cause” and a “failure”. But it was this so-called “failure” that added a quiet nobility, without bitterness, to her brief and rich life.³⁹⁰

The Territorialists attempted to expose the Zionists’ hostile approach. Their anti-Territorialism, the Freelanders concluded, was not based on the content of the Freeland League’s work. In fact, the Zionists agreed with many of the Territorialist conclusions and ambitions. “[T]hose purblind extremists who work so wholeheartedly to torpedo the prospects of Jewish colonization in Surinam”, *Freeland* wrote, merely felt their own propaganda work endangered.³⁹¹

Demonstrating similar sentiments, Territorialist inhabitants of the Austrian DP camps wrote in their ‘Call to the Jewish People’:

Pitilessly some of our Jews try to stick a knife into the back of the remnants of our people. Unseen hands work to destroy the chance of rescue for thousands in Surinam. Have you, Jews of America, forsaken all sense of solidarity with men who have lost all, men who need no more than a peaceful corner somewhere to heal their bleeding wounds? How can you punish us to become victims once more, just so that they might prove there is only one escape...in Eretz Israel[?]³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Siegel to Steinberg, 5 August 1956, YIVO RG366/337.

³⁹⁰ *Jewish Newsletter. Independent thinking on Jewish problems* XII, no. 23 (26 November 1956) (edited by William Zuckerman), YIVO RG682/682.

³⁹¹ ‘Left-Handed Zionism’, *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 8-12: 8.

³⁹² Second Freeland Conference, 9-10 October 1948, ‘A call to the Jewish People’, 1948, YIVO RG366/167; ‘A Call To The Jewish People!’, *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 20.

Territorialists did not only react to Zionist attacks; they also had clear opinions about Zionist ideology and activities. The two most important points of contention were the way in which the Freelanders viewed the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, and the development of the “Arab Question” there.

Points of Contention: The Jewish state

As for the first issue, the Zionist focus on statehood in Palestine, an official 1946 Freeland statement read: “It is high time that the problem of suffering Jewry be released from the iron grip of the Palestine dilemma. It must not be reduced to a sterile debate for or against Palestine, for or against Zionism.”³⁹³ As we have already seen, this did not mean that Palestine as a place of Jewish settlement was wholly dismissed. On the contrary, in a way similar to the dual visions of both Ahad Ha’Am and Rawidowicz, Territorialists increasingly incorporated Palestine into their grand scheme. They even presented Territorialism as a stimulating factor for the Zionist project.

The Freelanders did offer fierce criticisms of the proposed Jewish *State* in Palestine, which was “the focal point of a thousand conflicting and irreconcilable religious, economic, political, military and social interests. It is burdened with a thousand lies and prejudices and hates. It is a battleground and a highway to battlegrounds.”³⁹⁴ Steinberg’s own ideological trauma of the transformation of the Bolshevik ideals into an oppressive state made him oppose any state building ambitions on the part of the Zionists.³⁹⁵

Also from a socio-religious point of view, such a state was highly problematic for Territorialists. The famous Yiddish writer Shmuel (Charney) Niger—incidentally father-in-law to Steinberg’s youngest daughter Mita (Shulamit)—wrote to *Freeland* that both he and Steinberg believed that neither the Messiah, nor his herald Messiah Ben-Joseph had arrived. The creation of a Jewish state was therefore not yet warranted. He then continued: “You [the Territorialists] want a Free Land because you want a free people, a people not enslaved by something they have been talked into. This is my wish also[.]”³⁹⁶ In 1951, Erich Fromm, a recent Freeland-adept, argued against seeing a linkage between

³⁹³ Freeland League Statement, 17 September 1946, YIVO RG366/515; ‘There Are Real Possibilities. Statement of the Freeland League’, *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 3-4, 19: 3.

³⁹⁴ Samuel J. Stoll, ‘An Appeal to Jewish Reason’, attached to letter to Steinberg, 24 March 1944, YIVO RG366/584.

³⁹⁵ Mikhail Krutikov, “Isaac Nahman Steinberg: From Anti-Communist Revolutionary to Anti-Zionist Territorialist,” *Jews in Eastern Europe*, no. Spring-Fall (1999): 23.

³⁹⁶ ‘Letters’, *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 19.

the creation of the Jewish state and the “fulfilment of Jewish messianic hopes”. Using explicitly religious arguments, Fromm claimed that such a connection would mean an act of idolatry: a worshipping of the state, rather than of God. In Jewish tradition, he added, right had always stood above might and morality above power.³⁹⁷ Jews should be reminded of the essence of Judaism, translated into modern terms, but still with the Tanach at its centre.³⁹⁸

Whether argued on religious or on secular grounds, the Territorialists observed that for Zionists the land had become more important than the people.³⁹⁹ In numerous public addresses and publications, the Freelanders pointed at the fact that the creation of a Jewish state, in the face of persistent Arab hostility towards it, would lead to the unwanted militarisation of Jewish life. This life had so far always “kept aloof from Etatism, Chauvenism, Militarism”.⁴⁰⁰ Now, in the eyes of the world—tormented by imperial conflicts and social upheaval—and especially in the eyes of the Arabs, Jews had become political fighters.⁴⁰¹ “The Jewish youth as well as cultural life in Palestine will be deeply affected by these military measures,” the Freelanders asserted, “to the detriment of the spiritual growth of the Jewish community in Palestine and the Jewish world in the diaspora.”⁴⁰² “It is no good for people”, Steinberg told the Anglo-American Committee, “to emerge from the hell of Europe and immediately to plunge into new political troubles, even if they themselves are guiltless”.⁴⁰³

The existence of a second Jewish centre or of a Palestinian commonwealth would safeguard at least part of the pacifism that was considered central to Jewish culture and

³⁹⁷ Fromm even quoted Zachariah 4:6 to support his position: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”: Erich Fromm, ‘Jewish State And The Messianic Vision’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 11-12. This critique of the Zionist worshipping of the state and secular power was reiterated in: Mita Charney, ‘Erich Fromm On The “Jewish National Character”’, *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 11.

³⁹⁸ ‘On the Mental Health of the Jewish People. A talk between Dr. Erich Fromm and Dr. I.N. Steinberg’, *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 2-4: 4.

³⁹⁹ Leo Steinberg, ‘A Freelanders’ Comments on Zionist Misobservation’, *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 10-12.

⁴⁰⁰ Handwritten note Steinberg, 14 December 1947, YIVO RG366/337; ‘In search of a Jewish Freeland’, [1947-8], YIVO RG366/519. The anti-militarism argument based on its incompatibility with Jewish tradition was reiterated in: Steinberg, ‘The Way Of Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 2-4, and Steinberg, ‘Jews In Asia’, *Freeland* 8, no. 11 (June-July 1955): 5-6. See also Fruchtbaum, ‘An Evaluation Of Territorialism’, *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 5-6. Willy Birkenmaier compares Steinberg’s anti-militarism in the case of Palestine with that of Hannah Arendt: Birkenmaier, “Judentum Ohne Rückkehr,” 87.

⁴⁰¹ Steinberg, ‘Now Is the Time’, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (February 1946): 4-5, 19: 5.

⁴⁰² ‘The Palestine Decision’, *Freeland* 3, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 3, 15. Similar objections to the militarisation of the Israeli Jews and especially of Israeli youth via the so-called *gadna* or youth battalion courses were voiced by members of Ihud and the Israeli branch of War Resisters’ International: Simoni, “Hello Pacifist,” 93. The Freeland League had ties with these members (see also note 1374).

⁴⁰³ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 5.

spirituality.⁴⁰⁴ It would also contribute to the “pacification” of “humanity” at large.⁴⁰⁵ In 1946, Steinberg addressed all the types of undesirable wars he discerned in Jewish life. First of all, the Jews of Palestine were fighting the British. As Steinberg saw it, the British Labour Party had not erred in betraying its promise to the Zionists, but in making that unrealistic and immoral promise in the first place. Simultaneously, the Zionists had transgressed with their 1942 Biltmore Program, stating not a Palestinian, but a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine as their aim. This goal was unattainable and had falsely incited Jewish youth. The second war was the war between Jews and Arabs; the third one between Jews and Jews in Palestine: the violent actions of the Irgun, Hagana and Stern Gang (or LEHI) were eating up the Jewish soul.⁴⁰⁶

The direct connection the Territorialists established with known Zionist pacifists such as Ihud-members Nathan Chofshi (Nathan Fraenkl) and Rabbi Benyamin (Yehoshua Radler-Feldmann) shows the extent of the movement’s attachment to such pacifist ways of thinking. It also demonstrates that it had a support base in Israel.⁴⁰⁷ In 1959, an Israeli “Friends of the Freeland League” organisation was established.⁴⁰⁸ Other heterodox Zionists (all of them members of the erstwhile Brit Shalom and/or current Ihud movements), including Martin Buber, Judah L. Magnes, and at one point *Freeland*-editor Hans Kohn, also contributed to this ideological development and their opinions were

⁴⁰⁴ Handwritten note Steinberg, 14 December 1947, YIVO RG366/337; ‘In search of a Jewish Freeland’, [1947-8], YIVO RG366/519. For more on the Freeland League’s objection to the militarisation of the Yishuv, see Samuel J. Stoll, ‘An Appeal to Jewish Reason’, attached to letter to Steinberg, 24 March 1944, YIVO RG366/584; ‘What Parliament Thinks’, *Freeland* 2, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1946): 8-10, 17.

⁴⁰⁵ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 9, 11.

⁴⁰⁶ Steinberg, ‘End the War!’, *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 5-7, 14-15: 5-6, 15; Steinberg, Political Negotiations and Prospects’, *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 4, 16: 4. Steinberg, “Nider Mit Der Milkhome [End the War].” Hannah Arendt shared Steinberg’s support for a federal Palestinian commonwealth, and his rejection of an ethnically defined Jewish one. She opposed any minority/majority structure between Jews and Arabs: Rubin, “From Federalism,” 396-7, 403, 402.

⁴⁰⁷ Nathan Chofshi, ‘On The Brink’ (translated from Magnes’ periodical *Ba’ayot Hazman*), *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 13-14; ‘The Other Voice Of Israel’: ‘Man And Agriculture’, *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 7-8; Aaron Staff, ‘Contrasts In Personalities’, *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 4-6; Rabbi Benyamin [Yehoshua Radler-Feldmann], ‘For The Sake Of Survival’, *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 9-10; Letters Nathan Chofshi and Rabbi Benyamin [Reb Benyomin] to annual Freeland League Banquet 1954: *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954): 18; ‘In The Freeland League’, *Freeland* 8, no. 10 (April-May 1955): 10-12: 11-12; ‘Greetings To The Freeland Banquet [letters from Benyamin and Chofshi]’, *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 8-9; ‘The Man Reb Benyomin’, *Freeland* 9, no. 3 (June-July-August 1956): 9-10. Chofshi was also the first chairman of the War Resisters’ International – Israel Section. For more about this organisation, established in 1946, and about Chofshi’s role in it, see Simoni, “Hello Pacifist,” esp. 77, 79, 86, 88, 93, 95. Like Steinberg, Chofshi (1889-1980), a Polish immigrant of the second Aliyah and co-founder of Kibbutz Nahalal, demonstrated a religious and at the same time socialist-internationalist worldview. The main difference between the two men was that Chofshi, a vegetarian pacifist, was also a convinced Zionist, albeit one who severely criticised the mainstream Zionist leadership.

⁴⁰⁸ *Freeland* 12, no. 2 (Oct.-Nov. 1959): 15-16.

often (re)printed in *Freeland*.⁴⁰⁹ The connections to these individuals strengthened the ambivalence the Territorialists felt towards the Jewish state: they did not support its establishment, but were still concerned with its wellbeing. Under the influence of especially Magnes' work, the Freelanders hoped that "[a] day will come when the military-statist passions will cool off in the land of Israel" and that the Jews would return to the true Jewish ideal of peace.⁴¹⁰ Reflecting his own views, Kohn wrote about Magnes that "[h]e [Magnes] was afraid lest Zion might fall prey to the self-righteous nationalism which after 1914 destroyed the moral texture of so many peoples."⁴¹¹ National independence, Kohn believed, had not led to peace, prosperity and liberty, as nineteenth century thinkers such as Giuseppe Mazzini had thought it would. Instead, it had made formerly oppressed peoples oppress yet others.⁴¹²

Especially the Irgun and Stern Gang were targets of Territorialist criticism. In the U.S., Saul Goodman complained, "the land of yesterday's idealists [...] well-meaning but shallow people who cannot resist the fashionable movements of our confused times" were charmed by the Irgun's violent actions.⁴¹³ "Have they all been hit with the blindness of vulgar chauvinism?" *Freeland* asked, "Have they forgotten the most beautiful chapter in our history that King David was not permitted to build the Temple because he has shed the blood of 'enemies' in national wars?" Following statements in Magnes' periodical *Ba'ayot Hazman* (Issues of the Times), and echoing Einstein's letter to the *New York Times* of 4 December 1948, *Freeland* complained that the Irgun's leader, Menachem Begin, was falsely considered a hero. Begin, likened to Charles de Gaulle, represented a harmful nationalism that was willing to sacrifice freedom and development to forge the people into an instrument of the state.⁴¹⁴ In 1956, William Zuckerman repeated this opinion:

⁴⁰⁹ See, for instance: Martin Buber, 'Let us make an end to falsities!' (translated and reprinted from *Ba'ayot Hazman*, 1 October 1948), *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 3; Judah L. Magnes, 'Responsibility', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 11-13; Hans Kohn, 'In Memory Of Two Great Teachers', *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 3-4. Steinberg knew Buber personally, and the latter even contributed to the Steinberg memorial book that was published in 1961: 'Remarks Of Frances R. Grant [Secretary General of the Inter American Association for Democracy and Freedom/ Secretary of the International League for the Rights of Man]: Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5; Benjamin Jacob Bialostotzky and Melech Ravitch, *Yitshok Nahmen Shteynberg* (1961), 159-166. Steinberg's writings do seem to reflect many of Buber's ideas. For an exploration of these elements in Buber's thought, see Martin Buber and Asher D. Biemann, *The Martin Buber Reader: Essential Writings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 268-288.

⁴¹⁰ 'Dr. Judah L. Magnes', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 2. For more on Magnes see Arthur A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), esp. 38-48.

⁴¹¹ Hans Kohn, 'In Memory Of Two Great Teachers', *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 3-4.

⁴¹² Hans Kohn, 'Does Sovereignty Ensure Security', *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 8-9.

⁴¹³ Saul Goodman, 'Shlomo Mendelson', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 5.

⁴¹⁴ 'Degradation and Blasphemy', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 2-3.

nationalistic propaganda had created [a] spiritual and psychological mess [...] in the minds and hearts of American Jews".⁴¹⁵ According to Zuckerman, Steinberg was one of the few in the United States who endeavoured to create an awareness of this process.⁴¹⁶

Through its historically grounded belief in a Jewish future without Jewish statehood, Territorialism aimed to be less "fatalistic" than Zionism.⁴¹⁷ In fact, the creation of a new state was not only unnecessary for Jews, but also undesirable in a post-war world that did not need more states.⁴¹⁸ Unfortunately, the Jewish international press seemed "phantastically far" removed "from the true Jewish realities. It still does not see the tragic extent of the problems both of the Jewish people as a whole and of the State of Israel in particular. It still plays around with old-fashioned 'national' slogans and 'statist' sentiments – and we can only hope that it will stop the game in time."⁴¹⁹

Another point of critique was directed at the ever more rigid immigration selection criteria the Zionists applied. On the one hand, the Territorialists welcomed these criteria as a necessary check on an immigration that Palestine and later Israel were not able to absorb anyway. On the other hand, they perceived it as a problem for all those Jews that were in need of an outlet.⁴²⁰ The Freelanders stressed how their work was aimed at helping a much larger group than the narrow Zionist project aspired to do. Moreover, they claimed they had been anticipating the closing of the doors of immigration countries for years.⁴²¹ Steinberg, always a master of diplomacy, phrased the Territorialist criticism of the growing Zionist exclusivity as a seemingly neutral argument in support of the need for an alternative:

Zionism will now mostly care for the upbuilding of a Jewish political nation, while the Freeland League has in mind the interests of the Jewish

⁴¹⁵ W. Zuckerman, 'Where Is Our Inferiority', *Freeland* 9 No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1956) 13.

⁴¹⁶ W. Zuckerman, 'Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5-6: 6.

⁴¹⁷ Steinberg, 'Now Is the Time', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (February 1946): 4-5, 19: 19; Fruchtbaum, 'An Evaluation Of Territorialism', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 5-6.

⁴¹⁸ 'Washington Testimony', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 3,4, 12-13: 3. Moreover, Israel Knox pointed out the difficulties Israel citizenship laws posed for American Jews, who were not allowed dual citizenship at the time: 'Gleanings From The Press': 'The Nationality Act In Israel', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 15. See also S[aul] G[oodman], 'From Our Point Of View. The Palestine Report', *Freeland* 2, no. 3 (April-May 1946): 3-4; 'From Our Point Of View: Let's Talk Openly', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 3, 16; Erich Fromm, 'Jewish State And The Messianic Vision', *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 11-12; H. Sonnabend, 'The Royal Road', *Freeland* 6, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1952): 14-15.

⁴¹⁹ M. Levaadin [Steinberg], 'The Jewish Press On Freeland', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 3-4.

⁴²⁰ 'The Palestine Decision', *Freeland* 3, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 3, 15: 3; 'Israel Curbs Immigration', *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 1; Ada Siegel, 'Trends In Migration', *Freeland* 6, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1951): 10-11: 11; 'In The Freeland League', *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 12-13: 12.

⁴²¹ 'Back On The Agenda', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 1.

people as a whole, i.e. of every individual within the people. It is evident that this difference of conceptions causes also a deep difference in their next practical work. The Fr. League emerges out of this crisis with an even greater respons[i]bility for the existence of our wandering masses and for the creation for them of a new sound and politically secure home.⁴²²

In other words: the Zionist conception of the Jewish nation included only a limited part of the Jewish people, whereas the Territorialists cared for everybody. *Freeland* stated it in much harsher terms: as long as the Zionists held on to their rigid position regarding Palestine, it was no longer only Hitlerism that was to blame for the Jewish plight.⁴²³

As the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine became an increasingly realistic option, this posed a fundamental problem for the Territorialists. Thus far, they had been able to argue that their scheme stood significantly more chances of success than the Zionist one. Whereas Territorialism had been perceived as an unwanted competitor by the Zionists all along, it now also worked the other way around: the Zionist project meant dangerous competition for the Territorialists. There was also a second issue connected to this new situation. While the Jews did not have a state of their own, Jewish settlers were expected to be loyal only to the country that had welcomed them in.⁴²⁴ As we have seen, this argument had been raised by Territorialists ever since the ITO-days. With the advent of a Jewish State, these dynamics might change: Jews around the world would now be suspected of cherishing dual loyalties. The loyalty-claim could thus no longer be convincingly made on the Territorialists' behalf.

In 1949, Steinberg wrote to the founder and director of The New School, Alvin Johnson, who was affiliated with the Freeland League already for some years.⁴²⁵ In this letter, Steinberg reminded Johnson of the fact that even if the arrival of the State of Israel made it seem "natural" for the Freeland League to cease most of its colonisation activities, this did not mean the end of the Territorialist work altogether.⁴²⁶ As the Australian Territorialist Solomon Stedman wrote in 1950, the Jewish state represented just a state

⁴²² Handwritten note Steinberg, 14 December 1947, YIVO RG366/337.

⁴²³ 'From Our Point of View: The Crisis in Palestine', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 3-4.

⁴²⁴ Memo Freeland League to J.W. Pehle (executive director War Refugee Board), [1946], YIVO RG366/515; Steinberg to J.B. Chifley (Prime Minister Australia), 29 April 1946, YIVO RG366/550.

⁴²⁵ 'English Speaking Division Grows As Activity Increases', *Freeland* 3, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1947): 2.

⁴²⁶ Alvin Johnson to Steinberg, 9 March 1948, YIVO RG682/600; 'Committee of Sponsors being formed, *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (May 1948): 1, 7; Steinberg to Alvin Johnson, 30 December 1949, YIVO RG682/325.

and not the Jewish people as a whole. Following this logic, in 1949, Paramaribo-based Freeland-supporter Hans Samson responded to an article in the Surinam press. The Zionist author of this article had claimed that not the Freeland League, but the new State of Israel should be the negotiating partner for the Dutch and Surinam governments. In his response, Samson argued that this would make just as much sense as Israelis negotiating on behalf of Polish Jews; in other words: no sense at all.⁴²⁷

After May 1948, most Territorialist criticism became directed at particular struggles of the young country. Israel's precarious position within the Middle East, owing to tensions with its neighbours, was one of those problems mentioned; the accompanying necessary militarisation, already repeatedly addressed before 1948, was another. Moreover, the new Jewish State seemed to be willingly ignoring all potential moral scruples if pragmatic reasons forced it to do so. One example of this behaviour was the rapprochement between Israel and Germany in the 1950s.⁴²⁸ Another was connected to Francis E. Walter, the U.S. Congressman who was co-responsible for the earlier mentioned McCarren-Walter Act, so unfavourable to Jewish immigrants. According to *Freeland*, Walter was too easily "absolved from his sins" by the Zionists after he positively judged Israel's capacity to take in North African Jewish immigrants in 1955.⁴²⁹

Moreover, as Steinberg wrote in 1949, the Freeland League was "concerned with Israel's internal crisis in the fields of economics and immigrant absor[p]tion". The Territorialist leader, basing himself on predictions by non-Territorialist specialists, foresaw huge, structural economic problems should immigration into Israel continue at the pace it was envisaged to do. Before, land had been needed for the Jews, but now this logic seemed to have been reversed: potential immigrants were actively approached and convinced to move to the Jewish state, even though this state was not capable of absorbing them. The result was enormous demographic pressure. Perhaps even more importantly, this large influx of people led to a segregation between members of the established *yishuv*, the "haves", and the new arrivals, the "have nots". It was not enough to just provide roofs over the heads of the immigrants; longer-term investment was also needed. This investment should not be only aimed at a state-controlled and centralised economy, threatening the further existence of the *kvutza*, the collective settlement. In

⁴²⁷ Response Hans Samson to article [?] Emanuels, [no date], YIVO RG682/566; S. Stedman, 'The Shpaltung Fun a Folk', 1950, YIVO RG682/480.

⁴²⁸ 'On The Cultural Front', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 15-16.

⁴²⁹ 'Everything Is Kosher If...', *Freeland* 8, no. 12 (Nov.-Dec. 1955): 1-2.

order for the new state to function in the long run, the immigration rate had to be slowed down and the Diaspora sustained for a longer period of time. The homelessness this might entail for a part of this Diaspora could be solved by a Territorialist project.⁴³⁰

Points of Contention: the "Arab Question"

The most elaborated and recurring Territorialist objection to the Zionist project related to the question of the Palestinian Arabs. In early 1945, the editors of the *Australian Jewish Forum* (established by Steinberg in 1941)⁴³¹ dismissed the Zionist rejection of the Kimberley proposal by pointing at the far more challenging conditions in Palestine: "though we know that [Australian] "white ants" are dangerously ferocious animals, we do not consider them as dangerous as armed, wild Arabs."⁴³² Leo Steinberg wondered how Zionists could claim that Palestine was most welcoming to Jews, thereby ignoring an Arab majority that did not want them.⁴³³

Steinberg himself was the most vocal critic when it came to the "Arab Question", both before and after 1948. He propagated cooperation between Jews and Arabs,⁴³⁴ but was not very optimistic about its feasibility.⁴³⁵ Without such a mutual understanding, an undesirable perpetual state of war would be the result, potentially even leading to the homelessness of the Jews in the Arab world.⁴³⁶ According to Fruchtbaum, Steinberg "feared for the existence of Israel because of what he regarded as the pugnacious policies [crossed out by Schaechter: "the false and warlike tactics"] of the Israeli Government[.]"⁴³⁷ The adoption of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine on 27 November 1947 worried the Freelanders: they saw it as the beginning of even more violent encounters between Jews and the Arab world. The Arabs would try to return to Palestine, as "[i]t cannot be supposed that great numbers of dispossessed Arabs would agree to renounce their claim to their homes and lands which are as dear to them as Palestine is to

⁴³⁰ Steinberg, 'Free Israel and "Freeland"', *Freeland Bulletin* (December 1949), YIVO RG682/298.

⁴³¹ Leon Gettler, *An Unpromised Land* (South Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1993), 102.

⁴³² 'Our Press', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 21.

⁴³³ Leo Steinberg, 'A Freelanders' Comments on Zionist Misobservation', *Freeland* 1, no. 5 (June 1945): 10-12.

⁴³⁴ Steinberg, 'Facing Realities', *Freeland* 1, no. 2 (February 1945): 1-2.

⁴³⁵ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 4.

⁴³⁶ 'Freeland World Outlook Convincingly Presented', *Freeland Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (February 1948): 4, 6. For more about anti-Jewish actions in the Arab world after 1948, see: Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 176-9.

⁴³⁷ Draft speech Fruchtbaum, 'Evaluation of Dr. I.N. Steinberg', [1957], YIVO RG682/327.

the Jews". In the meantime, a Territorialist alternative would mean a solution for the "Jewish *people* as a whole", rather than just for the Jewish political nation.⁴³⁸

Other Territorialists also raised the Arab issue. Some saw the presence of the Arabs as an impediment to the Zionist project, even after the state of Israel had already become a fact. As late as September 1948, one Territorialist commentator incorrectly predicted that the "transitory flirtation" of the American government with the Zionists would not last beyond the American elections. The British and the American stakes in the Middle East, mainly concerning oil, were too high for them to ever go permanently against the Arabs in favour of the Zionists.⁴³⁹ Already in 1943, Edith Zangwill similarly expected that the newly formed UN would never oppose the Arabs, especially with the unrest amongst the Muslims in India also on the agenda.⁴⁴⁰

Furthermore, apart from Palestine being a problematic location from a political and strategic point of view, the Territorialists had also moral objections to a confrontation with the Arabs: "Our true tragedy occurred [...] when Jews abandoned their dignity and inner security, when they suddenly adopted the role of persecut[o]r of another minority. With this they are creating moral anguish for themselves."⁴⁴¹ Jewish statehood had turned Jews all over the world from a "people of mercy" into a "people of brutality", for whom a violent treatment of Arabs had become acceptable.⁴⁴² The Freelanders deplored such instances of anti-Arab violence, such as the Deir Yassin Massacre of 9 April 1948, at the hands of the Irgun and the Stern Gang,⁴⁴³ and the Qibya (or: Kibya) Massacre of 14 October 1953.⁴⁴⁴ The Israeli Nationality Law of 14 July 1952 was deemed discriminatory, as it required only the Arabs in Israel to provide proof of their presence during the mandate period in order to obtain citizenship.⁴⁴⁵ For similar reasons, the Territorialists criticised the 1953 Land Acquisition Act.⁴⁴⁶

⁴³⁸ 'The Palestine Decision', *Freeland* 3, no. 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1947): 3, 15: 3; Handwritten note Steinberg, 14 December 1947, YIVO RG366/337; S. Stedman, 'The Shpaltung Fun a Folk', 1950, YIVO RG682/480

⁴³⁹ Samuel J. Stoll, 'An Appeal to Jewish Reason', attached to letter to Steinberg, 24 March 1944, YIVO RG366/584; [Unknown author], handwritten 'Plan of approaching Zionists with our proposed solution (Palestine plus Tanganyika)', 8 September 1948, YIVO RG366/589.

⁴⁴⁰ Edith Zangwill to Herwald, 8 January 1943, YIVO RG255, Box 2.

⁴⁴¹ 'On the Mental Health of the Jewish People. A talk between Dr. Erich Fromm and Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 2-4: 3.

⁴⁴² 'Gleanings From The Press', *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 12-13.

⁴⁴³ 'Deir Yassin', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 4.

⁴⁴⁴ Steinberg, 'The Jubilee Of An Idea', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 2-3; Letter Rabbi Benyamin [Reb Benyomin] to annual Freeland League Banquet 1954: *Freeland* 8, no. 6 (March-April 1954): 18.

⁴⁴⁵ 'Gleanings From The Press': 'The Nationality Act In Israel', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 15.

⁴⁴⁶ 'Gleanings From The Press', *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (April-May 1953): 15. See also Azriel Karlebach [ex-editor *Maariv*], 'I Talk With My Daughter' [reprinted from *Maariv*], *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 11-13. Both

On more than one occasion, *Freeland* published articles advocating Martin Buber's and Judah Magnes' binational solution for Palestine,⁴⁴⁷ and the return of Arab refugees to Israel.⁴⁴⁸ These thinkers and their movement Ihud, endorsed by prominent individuals like Albert Einstein and Leo Baeck, were not enough appreciated by the (American) Jewish public, the Territorialist periodical asserted.⁴⁴⁹ Ihud was indeed not held in great esteem by the Zionist mainstream. Hannah Arendt had criticised the movement from its founding in 1942 until 1948 (when she changed her opinion and started supporting Magnes' cause).⁴⁵⁰ In 1959, in his introduction to some of Magnes' writings, the Zionist historian Arthur Hertzberg described Ihud (which he did not mention by name) as "a small, but intellectually notable, group of more or less unqualified pacifists who were trying to find a basis for an Arab-Jewish compromise—and the people to do the compromising".⁴⁵¹

The Freelanders disagreed: they considered Ihud's leaders highly qualified. Erich Fromm saw a direct ideological and spiritual connection between the movement and the Freeland League.⁴⁵² Steinberg praised Ihud for always having kept the "desires" and the "sufferings" of their Arab neighbours in mind: "The Yikhud [Ihud] stood up against the tendencies in Israel to national arrogance, to state glory, to military self-confidence, to every manner of moral assimilation."⁴⁵³

the Nationality Law and the Land Acquisition/Requisition Act were criticised by Chofshi and his circle: Simoni, "'Hello Pacifist'," 87-8, 92.

⁴⁴⁷ Monroe Berger, 'The Middle East: Sore Spot', *Freeland* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 6-8; 8; 'From Our Point of View: The Crisis in Palestine', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 3-4; Ada Siegel, 'Palestine: The Problem', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 10, 14; 10; [Archibald] Fenner Brockway, 'Palestine: The Solution', *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 11-12; Nathan Chofshi, 'On The Brink' (translated from Magnes' periodical *Ba'ayot Hazman*), *Freeland* 2, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1946): 13-14; 'The latest issue of the "Ner" [the periodical of Ihud]', *Freeland* 6, no. 1 (Sept.-Oct. 1951): 12; Reb Benyomin [Yehoshua Radler-Feldmann], 'For The Sake Of Survival', *Freeland* 7, no. 5 (Nov.-Dec. 1953): 9-10. For more on Brit Shalom's and Ihud's stance towards the Arabs see Steven E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), ch. 1.

⁴⁴⁸ 'Greetings To The Freeland Banquet [letters from Reb Benyamin and Nathan Chofshi]', *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 8-9.

⁴⁴⁹ 'Deir Yassin', *Freeland* 4, no. 2 (May-June 1948): 4; 'Dr. Judah L. Magnes', *Freeland* 5, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1949): 2.

⁴⁵⁰ Rubin, "From Federalism," 394, 407, 411-2. Rubin ascribes Arendt's change of heart to her realisation that her ideal image of a federal structure was not attainable. In the changing political circumstances, Magnes offered the best of the realistic options available. See esp. 411-2.

⁴⁵¹ Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 441.

⁴⁵² 'On the Mental Health of the Jewish People. A talk between Dr. Erich Fromm and Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 6, no. 5 (June-July 1952): 2-4: 4.

⁴⁵³ Steinberg, 'On The Tenth Anniversary Of The "Yikhud" In Israel', *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 4. See also Aaron Staff, 'Impressions From Israel', *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1953): 2-3. This open appreciation for, and affiliation with Ihud disproves Rovner's claim that the two movements were essentially different. According to Rovner, the Territorialists opposed the binationalism, utopianism and

In 1946, Ada Siegel published a long and more practical critique of the Palestinian situation. In addition to the ancient-old religious conflicts, she pointed at oil interests, social upheavals in Iran, Iraq and Syria, and at emerging (post)colonial struggles as factors complicating the Palestinian situation. Also important were the conflicting interests of the great powers within the newly established UN, and Soviet Russia's appearance on the scene. With this in mind, Siegel warned her readers:

The heartrending cries from Europe make us want to ignore all the imperialistic squabbles and demand action—and justly. But it must be clear that *if* we choose Palestine as the only haven of refuge for the martyrs of our people; *if* we insist on the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as the only solution to the Jewish problem—then we must be prepared inescapably to become part of all conflicts and problems that beset that section of the world. We cannot expect to enter Palestine as if it were an empty country of no interest to anyone, set up our own type of economy, our own type of society, and not become involved.⁴⁵⁴

The demands of the Palestinian Arabs had to be reckoned with: “Highly civilized peoples have been whipped into rage directed against an element alien to their lives. Then why not the Arabs?” The Palestinian Arabs felt strengthened by the contemporary colonial awakening and they might even receive support from the Soviets. Despite Territorialism's traditional reliance on a colonial world system, the only way forward lay in an alliance between Jews and Arabs as part of the peoples' resistance against the colonial powers.⁴⁵⁵

The Territorialists thus imagined some form of cooperation with the Arabs. At the same time, they did not want to provide the Arab world with ammunition against the Zionists, as this might harm their own reputation. In May 1945, the Freeland League sent a memorandum to all the delegations attending the San Francisco Conference, with the

separatism that the Ihud proposed: Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 9. Interestingly, Zohar Maor points at the völkist adherence to military violence in particular cases of Brit Shalom and Ihud's ideological origins, mainly represented by Martin Buber and in his wake Gershom Scholem, Hans Kohn and Hugo Bergmann: Maor, “Moderation,” 84, 97, 88-9, 90.

⁴⁵⁴ Ada Siegel, ‘Palestine: The Problem’, *Freeland* 2, no. 4 (June-July 1946): 10, 14: 10.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

exception of the Arab ones. As Steinberg wrote cryptically to Judge Irving Lehman: "You will easily understand our reasons for that."⁴⁵⁶

Nonetheless, even when cautiously condoning the Zionist activities in Palestine, no opportunity was missed by the Territorialists to state the importance of an agreement with the Arabs. They seemingly attached no greater value to the rights of Jews to Palestine than to the claims of the Arab Palestinians. Even if all Jews would be allowed into Palestine, biblical history had shown how there had always been problems between the Jews and their neighbours. The only way to improve this situation was to create a state with equal rights for the three world religions residing there.⁴⁵⁷

By 1953, Jews seemed to be leaving Israel again. According to *Freeland*, the reason for this was the lack of a spiritually stimulating environment there.⁴⁵⁸ Like their friends in the Ihud thought about their own movement,⁴⁵⁹ the Freelanders thus felt that their continued labour was also needed. In the meantime, the Arab question remained the hottest topic on the agenda. In 1956, Henri van Leeuwen proposed a continuation of the *galut*, in order to find the way "to the heart of our Arab brothers".⁴⁶⁰ In 1962, Judah Zelitch pointed out that the creation of the Jewish state had created major tensions with the Arab world. The Zionist project, led by Ben-Gurion, who was "fanatic" about the ingathering of the Jewish exiles, had only worked because of the disappearance of 700,000 Arabs from Palestine. As long as the Palestinian refugee issue remained unsolved, Israel would see no peace. There were still many potential Jewish immigrants, especially behind the "Iron Curtain". These could not go to Palestine, as this would aggravate the already existing problems. Moreover, the governments of their current countries would not easily let them go, out of fear that this would antagonise the Arab world. For the sake of both Israeli peace and these future immigrants Zelitch therefore still believed in the importance of a Territorialist alternative.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁶ Steinberg to Judge Irving Lehman, 7 May 1945, YIVO RG682/507.

⁴⁵⁷ Memorandum T.B. Herwald for ITO to Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry for Palestine, 4 February 1946, YIVO RG366/27 and YIVO RG255, Box 1.

⁴⁵⁸ 'Let My People Go', *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 1; 'What is Freeland Doing?', *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1953): 1; 'Gleanings From The Press', *Freeland* 7, no. 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1953): 15-16. Also: 'Israel Land Of Emigration', *Freeland* 11, no. 2 (July-Sept. 1958): 1.

⁴⁵⁹ Martin Buber, "Should the Ichud Accept the Decree of History?," in *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, eds. Martin Buber and Paul R. Mendes-Flohr (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948/2005).

⁴⁶⁰ Original: "tot het hart van onze Arabische broeders": Henri van Leeuwen to Noodfonds Israel, 9 March 1956, YIVO RG682/615.

⁴⁶¹ Judah Zelitch, 'To the International Community - Jewish Migration Is Also Your Problem', *Freeland* XV, no. 3 (December 1962). A reprint of the article can be found in: YIVO RG670. See also Leo Heiman, 'Israel's

Conclusion

The diverse and polarised Jewish political world of interwar Europe had all but vanished by the war's close. Jewish politics were now being waged on the other side of the Atlantic and the Freeland League had joined that scene as well. The Territorialists quickly adapted to the American-Jewish landscape. At first, this adaptation process seemed successful, as the Freelanders garnered the support of influential labour unions often dominated by Jews. Due to the already established nature of the American-Jewish political constellation, as well as to the growing power of the Zionists, the Freelanders eventually found that there was limited space for relative newcomers. A different political approach was thus needed and under the leadership of Steinberg the "man-to-man diplomacy" Zangwill had pioneered was further developed and refined. That is to say, the charismatic Steinberg invested heavily in personal contacts with influential figures in both Jewish and non-Jewish political circles, mostly in the United States. At the same time, the Freeland League moved "back" to Zionism, but not to its mainstream version: it found common basis with the leaders of the binationalist Brit Shalom and its successor organisation Ihud. Partly through this affiliation the Freelanders, mostly by voice of Steinberg, formulated an increasingly fierce critique of Zionist policies, which they found to be militaristic, immoral and un-Jewish. The Territorialists distinguished a direct link between Zionist/Israeli policies and a general degradation of Jewish life.

As for the Territorialist program, this was more than ever defined by the ongoing larger discussion about the redrawing of a post-war world order. The Freelanders engaged with related population policies under the rubric "trends in migration". Even though potential territories were still sought within a colonial setting, the Territorialist rhetoric now showed sympathy for the former or soon-to-be former colonised. This anti-colonial awareness did not contradict with the high hopes the Territorialists had that their project might materialise within the context of border alterations and population exchanges. They followed such trends in which U.S. geographers were key and relied heavily on the potential support of international organisations, some of which were connected to the newly established United Nations. Lastly, by presenting itself as a movement seeking a partial solution for the Jewish Displaced Persons issue, the Freeland

Occupation Problem [Reprinted from Bnai Brith's *The National Jewish Monthly*], *Freeland* 21, no. 2 (Dec. 1968): 9-10.

League exposed its awareness that in order to get policy makers on board, the Territorialists had to be perceived as part of a larger post-war geopolitical project.

Conclusion

The story of Territorialism is the story of a small Jewish movement harbouring big ideals. It is also the story of how this movement's advocates reflected and related to changing geopolitical ideas and discourses, as well as to political realities. It shows the fluid meaning of "Judaism" and "Jewishness" in the twentieth century, and lastly, but perhaps most significantly, it reveals the histories of a handful of significant, but nowadays largely forgotten individuals.

By telling this story, I have pursued two main lines of argument: first of all, to understand Territorialist history and the movement's visions for a Jewish political and cultural future means to contribute to a larger understanding of Jewish political behaviour during the first half of the twentieth century. So far, Territorialism was a missing piece in the puzzle of this grander narrative that scholars have only recently begun to reconstruct. Secondly, this study has demonstrated the resonance of larger geopolitical trends and debates within Territorialist thought. Similarly, I argue, studying Territorialism sheds light on these changing trends and discourses, most notably colonialism, imperial worldviews, decolonisation, racialism and racism, population politics ("empty spaces" and population exchanges), and the intersection of migratory trends and geography. The Territorialists' continuously critical engagement with the "Arab Question" in Palestine intersected with both their Jewish-political agenda and with their geopolitical visions. This issue thus forms a connecting feature between this study's two main arguments.

In his re-evaluation of the Uganda proposal, Mark Levene analyses the entire affair as if the 1905 rejection of the plan was not yet a fact. In other words, he tries to analyse the importance of Uganda at the time it was considered. Levene's methods could be seen as counterfactual and speculative.¹ In defending his approach Levene refers to British historian Niall Ferguson who stated that "what if?"-histories can and should be subject to academic analysis if they were seen as realistic options by their contemporaries.² Jacob Katz echoes this opinion: "Although speculation on the possible results of a contingency

¹ Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman, "Between the East End and East Africa: Rethinking Images of 'the Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture," in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 22.

² Mark Levene, "Herzl, the Scramble, and a Meeting That Never Happened: Revisiting the Notion of an African Zion," in *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, eds. Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 217, n.12.

that did not arise is not the *métier* of the historian, he may be permitted to indulge himself if this speculation puts real events in a sharper perspective.”³

Nevertheless, exploring such “what if?”-scenarios is mainly considered a popular pastime for creative minds. The idea of alternative Jewish homelands has been a recurrent literary trope ever since the State of Israel became a fact in May 1948. Recent years have seen several such literary products inspired by the Territorialist past.⁴ One recent example is Michael Chabon’s *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union*, a novel set in the fictional Jewish district of Sitka in Alaska, created after the collapse of the Jewish state in 1948.⁵ This may not be an accidental choice: as we have seen, Alaska was one of the places the Territorialists explored. At most, these literary activities help to salvage the Territorialist past from total oblivion, but at the same time they contribute to a false image of the Territorialist endeavours as marginal historical curiosities, food for writers and artists, but by no means part of serious, mainstream historiography. This work has been an attempt to alter this image.

The question remains: did Territorialism ever constitute a clearly defined movement? Even though it could be argued that the Territorialists never espoused a univocal set of goals and ideals and that their core political and cultural demands changed over time—as did the Zionists’ and Diaspora Nationalists’⁶—the main, unifying aim remained the same: a commitment to finding places of settlement for Jews outside Palestine. Furthermore, I adhere to Ezra Mendelsohn’s assertion that a Jewish political organisation is one that defines itself as such.⁷ Jewish Territorialism, in its different appearances, thus constituted a nationally inspired Jewish political organisation and movement.

Moreover, neither the limited size of this movement, nor its lack of a well-defined ideological and political programme renders Territorialism insignificant to the history of Jewish political behaviour. Even though Benjamin Nathans states that the most ideologically coherent group generally defines the historical record,⁸ this does not mean that less coherent or politically less developed groups cannot be studied as the groups

³ Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto; the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 218.

⁴ Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 224-6.

⁵ Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union* (London: Fourth Estate, 2007).

⁶ Joshua Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013), 5-6.

⁷ Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

they envisioned and presented themselves to be. At the end of the day, the Territorialists may have formed a political movement, a cultural organisation, or an elitist collection of Jewish intellectuals that did not feel at home within the larger Jewish political platforms of the day. However one views them, they do form part of the story of twentieth-century Jewish political behaviour.

The ITO formulated its aims in limited political terms, and the Freeland League explicitly distanced itself from any political partisanship. Nevertheless, even if Territorialism did not aspire to statehood—at least Zangwill was for some time undecided on this point, and eventually deemed a state “impracticable”⁹—it was undoubtedly still a political movement. This movement relied on governments to grant it a part of their territories, and, as time progressed, the Territorialists realised that especially in a decolonising and postcolonial setting local and indigenous political opinions mattered. For this reason, Steinberg devoted several years to propaganda work in Australia and the Freeland League aimed at good relations with the Surinamese political elite during its negotiations with Surinam and The Netherlands. Rather than a diametrically changing opinion on the part of the Freelanders about the merits of empire, this increasing engagement with the “colonised” signals a growing awareness of the rapid shifting of colonial power dynamics in the 1940s and ‘50s. It remains striking, however, how quickly the Territorialist reliance on an imperial world system changed shape after the Second World War, whereas this reliance had been so central to the movement’s ambitions and approaches throughout the whole of its existence until the outbreak of the war.

If the Territorialists were indeed “political”, despite their own claims to the contrary, they, like their Zionist “colleague” Brit Shalom, “transcend[ed] prevailing boundaries between right and left and particularism and universalism”.¹⁰ After the late 1930s, Isaac Steinberg decided the Freeland League’s political and ideological course. Steinberg resembled Ihud-founder Judah Magnes, who was a “religious social radical”, combining seemingly incompatible traits.¹¹ Hannah Arendt could have been describing Steinberg when she wrote of nineteenth century German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine that “[i]t is from this shifting of the accent, from this vehement protest on the part of the

⁹ Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?* (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1923), 15.

¹⁰ Zohar Maor, “Moderation from Right to Left: The Hidden Roots of Brit Shalom,” *Jewish Social Studies* 19, no. 2 (2013): 99.

¹¹ Arthur A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 50.

pariah, from this attitude of denying the reality of the social order and of confronting it, instead, with a higher reality, that Heine's spirit of mockery really stems."¹²

Steinberg's Territorialism was simultaneously ideological and practical, messianic and pragmatic, moralistic and realistic. For him, the Freeland League was a tool to improve both the state of Judaism and the human condition in general. In a way, Jewish politics for Steinberg meant a continuation of his Russian socialist-revolutionary career. As one of his political biographers states, Steinberg had represented the realistic social-revolutionary alternative to Lenin in and directly following the October Revolution, but had failed to implement it.¹³ His turn to Jewish politics, but explicitly against statism, was thus the result of practical experiences. At the same time, he also morally objected to the creation of new states: "Why [...] must the mirage of a Jewish State lead us off the clear path that leads to a new Jewish community?"¹⁴

Unfortunately for Steinberg, his anti-statism did not fit a post-war reality in which the role of the state had increased rather than subsided.¹⁵ Internationalism and cosmopolitanism were at times valued, but also regarded with suspicion in the West, especially as they gained communist connotations. Organisations and individuals that were inclined to support internationalist ideals were therefore extremely careful not to publicly espouse such views.¹⁶ After the short-lived popularity of the idea of a world government in the 1940s, partly as a result of atomic bomb-anxieties, international politics and the new discipline of international relations turned against internationalist idealism.¹⁷ The mismatch between Steinberg's ideals and political realities thus reduced his advocacy of Territorialism to yet another unrealised alternative.

It would be unfair, however, to end our concluding analysis of Steinberg's and the Freeland League's travails on this rather dismissive note. The authors of recent works on

¹² Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (1944): 104.

¹³ Philippe Kellermann, "Interview Mit Hendrik Wallat Zu Isaak Steinberg, 3 December 2013," Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, <http://www.rosalux.de/news/40063/interview-mit-hendrik-wallat-zu-isaak-steinberg.html> (retrieved 22 August 2015).

¹⁴ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 118.

¹⁵ Mark Mazower, "Reconstruction: The Historiographical Issues," in *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949*, eds. Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch, David Feldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 24.

¹⁶ Tara Zahra shows how such processes worked in the immediate post-war dealings with displaced children: Tara Zahra, "'A Human Treasure': Europe's Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism," in *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945-1949*, eds. Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch, David Feldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 332, 347.

¹⁷ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: the History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 231; Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 9.

non-strictly-statist nationalism have tended to introduce or conclude their studies with apologetic language, pointing towards the eventual failure of the projects under consideration. Some even explicitly “admit” that the alternative paths to Jewish nationhood they describe were doomed to fail from the outset.¹⁸ The “failure” of Territorialism’s “fantastic Jewish geographies” is a given and a starting point for Rovner’s understanding of the movement’s history, “and because they [the Territorialists] failed, their dreams and schemes have mostly been forgotten”.¹⁹

I argue that there are clear teleological pitfalls in the writing of an expectation of failure back into history. This does not mean denying the importance of an evaluation of Territorialism’s practical results. In retrospect, these may have been marginal. When assessing the broader situation of interwar political behaviour, the careers of many Jewish political actors, Territorialists included, were “successive waves of ideological disillusionment”.²⁰ Still, failure itself may not have been unavoidable.²¹ A failure-based approach to Territorialist history therefore limits our understanding of what Territorialism represented at the time of its existence. Taking failure as an analytical point of departure obscures the fact that the main protagonists of Territorialism were ambitious political actors for whom success and not failure was the premise. Admittedly, such ambition is unsurprising in itself, but the Territorialists were also seen as serious interlocutors by members of a wider Jewish and non-Jewish network surrounding them.

The Territorialists themselves were increasingly aware of the possibility that their goals would not be attained. For idealists like Steinberg this did not mean that these

¹⁸ Joshua Karlip, although sympathetic to his Diaspora Nationalist protagonists, repeatedly alludes to such imminent failure, and the eventual “utopian” status of the movements and individuals he studies: Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*. See also Joshua Karlip, “At the Crossroads between War and Genocide: A Reassessment of Jewish Ideology in 1940,” *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (2005): 170-201. James Loeffler names the marginality of the Diaspora Nationalist Oscar Janowsky as an example of the historical incompatibility of liberal internationalism and Jewish nationalism: James Loeffler, “Between Zionism and Liberalism: Oscar Janowsky and Diaspora Nationalism in America,” *AJS Review* 34, no. 2 (2010): 292. Before Karlip and Loeffler, Ezra Mendelsohn described both the Diaspora Nationalist Folkists and the Bund as an eventual “flop” and Zionism as the only party able to combine its main political aims with *Gegenwartsarbeit*: Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 69. Noam Pianko sees the failure of his three main protagonists to influence the Zionist mainstream as the main reason why they are currently not considered part of Zionist history: Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 23, 59, 175.

¹⁹ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, xii.

²⁰ Karlip, “At the Crossroads,” 171.

²¹ As Simon Rabinovitch writes regarding a similar projection of failure onto the history of Jewish Autonomism: “[T]o accept the inevitability of Jewish autonomism’s failure in the remnants of the Russian Empire is to a certain extent to accept the Bolshevik historical narrative of the inevitable triumph of proletarian socialism.”: Simon Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 277.

ideals should be abandoned. On the contrary, the more the harsh post-war realities made the Territorialist aims unlikely, the more the moral impetus was felt to keep trying. For Steinberg, the Freeland League's imminent failure, especially after 1948, may have even contributed to the movement's moral victory over Zionism. Shortly after his death, William Zuckerman wrote about the Freeland-leader that " [his] [f]ailure, indeed," [...] was the same kind of 'failure' as that of the prophets; the 'failures' that keep alive the flame of hope and faith in a world foundering in a dark sea of fanaticism, hatred and pain."²²

Despite the sense of reality on the part of the Territorialists, when it came to their engagement with non-Jewish politicians, Rovner correctly typifies them as "visionaries" who were "blinded by a belief in the essential benevolence of the community of Western nation states they were eager to join as equals." The Territorialists underestimated the increasing prevalence of bureaucracy over individual diplomacy.²³ Also very apt is Rovner's simultaneous nuancing of the criticism that Territorialism only managed to achieve negotiations, without any practical results: after all, for the longest time, Zionism accomplished the same, or even less.²⁴

Seemingly against all odds some people continued to believe in Territorialism, even though no territory was in sight and the State of Israel was by now an accepted fact. "Why?" Yiddish writer B.I. Bialostotzky asked rhetorically. His answer: "Because the idea of Territorialism includes other concepts [...] it is *folkism*; it is Jewish; it is Yiddish."²⁵ Rather than avoiding "failure", one could thus also follow the Territorialist valuing of it as a product of pure and consistent morality and idealism, of an attachment to values that transcend everyday political considerations and realism. As one commentator wrote in *Freeland* in 1954: "In a world full of 'Real-Politiker' and practical Shlemiels the accusation of being dreamers is perhaps not so hard to take."²⁶

Insightful also is Monaco's observation that in the study of social movements scholars have increasingly abandoned the concepts of "success" and "failure" to focus instead on "outcomes" when assessing the meaning and effects of a particular

²² W. Zuckerman, 'Dr. I.N. Steinberg', *Freeland* 10, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1957): 5-6: 6.

²³ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁵ B.I. Bialostotzky, 'The Miracles Of Jewish Reality', *Freeland* 10, no. 2 (April-June 1957): 3-4.

²⁶ M. Levadin, 'The Jewish Press On Freeland', *Freeland* 8, no. 8 (Sept.-Oct. 1954): 3-4: 4.

organisation.²⁷ Steinberg himself had a similar approach. When asked in 1946 by the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine whether the ICA-colonies in Argentina were not a precedent in failure for Jewish colonisation projects, he answered: "I wouldn't say that the colonization of Argentina was a failure. I don't accept these traditional words about it." Failure, for Steinberg, was thus simply not a valid category of assessment. Indeed, the Argentinian settlements had not become what Baron de Hirsch had envisaged them to be, but there were nonetheless 30,000 Jewish farmers in Argentina.²⁸ By extension, even if the Territorialists did not achieve their intended results, this did not mean that their existence had no meaning or longer-term effect whatsoever.

Still, Territorialism was at a disadvantage compared to Zionism, which was able to bridge the gap between "space", represented by the Eastern European Jewish reality and "the space", meaning Palestine.²⁹ Territorialism only had spaces to offer that were as devoid of biblical meaning as the locales where the Jews already found themselves. The Territorialists could thus never compete with Zionism's spiritual advantage. However, as we have seen, not everyone was convinced by religiously inspired arguments when imagining the Jewish future. Also, similar arguments could be simultaneously used against Zionism and in favour of a Territorialist solution: after all, establishing a Jewish state in Palestine was a violation of religious prohibitions to do so before the advent of the Messianic age. Zionism was a clear winner with the masses, but Territorialism appealed for a long time to relatively small, but certainly not marginal groups of Jews and non-Jews.

As a result of the Territorialists' inability to materialise their plans, over time, they moved from secular Jewish politics to increasingly committing themselves to Yiddish culture and tradition. The Freeland League's transformation into the League for Yiddish in 1979 might be seen as the movement's final break away from modern Jewish politics. Nevertheless, until that moment, this gradual withdrawal from mainstream politics did not mean an abandonment of the project of modernity, but a reformulation of it. Seemingly paradoxically, the Territorialists created novel ways of imagining the Jewish future by turning to the Jewish past, religion, tradition and an inward-looking approach

²⁷ C. S. Monaco, *The Rise of Modern Jewish Politics: Extraordinary Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 178.

²⁸ *Statement before the Anglo-American Committee*, 16.

²⁹ Yigal Schwartz, "'Human Engineering' and Shaping Space in the New Hebrew Culture," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 3 (2005): 93-4.

to Jewish culture. At the same time, they never abandoned their attachment to scientific process and technology: not philanthropy, but business, and not just agriculture, but agro-industry were to define the Jewish future along Territorialist lines.

The Freelanders, more so than the ITO, propagated an investment in the (remnants of) the Diaspora to enable this future. During the centuries of exile, "Jerusalem" had been the abstract place of longing for Jews, and the Diaspora the tangible reality. With great foresight, Zangwill predicted in 1919 the growing differences between the future Jewish state and the Jewish Diaspora: "[H]owever the State and the Diaspora might act and react upon each other, they would grow more and more unlike each other."³⁰ By 1956, Jerusalem had become a real city in a real Jewish state and the Shoah had eliminated most of the Diaspora communities. This spurred Steinberg to urge for the preservation of Diaspora culture and values, the sum of which he summarised under the concept "Vilno", the city that had been one of the largest centres of pre-war Jewish culture and life: "Jerusalem must not swallow up Vilno".³¹

On the one hand, the wished-for Territorialist location for settlement was devoid of religious meaning: the Territorialists rejected the Jewish notions of "chosenness" and a "historic right" to Palestine. For them, Jewish culture and tradition constituted the binding force for a people, which needed practical geographical outlets. On the other hand, they infused the Jewish Diaspora with religious significance. Israel Knox stated as late as 1956 that wherever there were Jews there was the *shekhinah*, or God's proximity. Since most Jews still lived in the Diaspora, a continued investment in these communities was crucial. Not Jewish statehood, but Jewish life in a much broader sense granted Jewish existence its meaning: "To be a Jew is to live in history; it is to be at one with the centuries and the millennia."³² Here then was the real path on which Jews would "return" to history.

Both Zangwill and Steinberg had envisioned this return as a first step on the way to the fulfillment of the ancient Jewish task of acting as a moral vanguard to the rest of humanity. Zangwill saw a "Mission of Israel" for both Zionism and Territorialism by lifting the Jewish people to a higher civilisational status on a territory of its own.³³ This aim was why concentration and autonomy were crucial. A similar message also sounded from Brit

³⁰ Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 269.

³¹ Steinberg, 'Vilno and Jerusalem, *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 5-6

³² Israel Knox, 'Statehood Or Peoplehood', *Freeland* 9, no. 2 (April-May 1956): 4.

³³ Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 284-5.

Shalom-member Martin Buber's address to the sixteenth Zionist Congress in Zürich in 1929:

Zionism is not identical with Jewish nationalism. We are very right to call ourselves Zionists and not Jewish nationalists; for Zion means more than nation. Zionism is the belief in a uniqueness. 'Zion' is no generic term like 'nation' or 'state,' but a name that denotes something unique and incomparable. Nor is it a mere geographical expression like Canaan or Palestine. Rather, it has always been a name for something that ought to *come into existence* at a certain geographical place on this planet; something that once should have developed, and still ought to develop, or in the words of the Bible, the beginning of the kingdom of God for the human people.³⁴

According to Buber, Zionism and Judaism had a larger messianic task. Direct cooperation with the Palestinian Arabs was therefore not just a pragmatic, but first of all a moral imperative.³⁵ Buber's version of Zionism was thus in many ways closer to Territorialist ideology than to mainstream Zionism.

Perhaps the Territorialists were naive to believe large masses would move to a new Jewish settlement. Still, Steinberg wondered, why "should a Kimberley be excluded from the Jewish future? Certainly, it has not the romantic, magnetic power of the former Jewish homeland. But has it not—at the present period of our history—other positive attractions?"³⁶ Not everybody would be able or willing to migrate to Palestine, but Europe no longer offered a home either. Australia would not include Jewish statehood, but Steinberg was convinced that many would agree with him that cultural needs were more important:

apart from economic distress and homelessness, a spiritual factor will also operate. [...] [Kimberley] would offer the possibilities not only of escape from extinction, but also for creative, modern Jewish life. [...] Again, there would be the possibility of preparing the ground for undisturbed cultural

³⁴ Martin Buber and Asher D. Biemann, *The Martin Buber Reader: Essential Writings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 277.

³⁵ Ibid., 289-292.

³⁶ Steinberg, *Australia: The Unpromised Land*, 112-3.

progress, for the development of human dignity—in the spirit of Jewish traditions.³⁷

Steinberg did not get the opportunity to generate a mass idealism that would “plough the soil of the Kimberleys [or any other place] and achieve wonders comparable to those in Palestine”.³⁸ In both its major incarnations the Territorialist movement remained a small collection of well-connected intellectuals. However, these individuals did represent an important counter-voice on the Jewish political scene of the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, the Territorialist leaders were, without exception, in contact with many better-known Jewish and non-Jewish politicians, intellectuals, scientists, and writers. Investigating the way they envisioned the Jewish future therefore helps to (re-) contextualise broader historical events and trends.

A striking feature of the Territorialists is the fact that so many of them were writers, or, in Rovner’s words, “author-activists”. Both Zangwill and Leftwich, but also other literary giants like Stefan Zweig, Thomas Mann, and Alfred Döblin became affiliated with Territorialism. Steinberg had literary aspirations as well.³⁹ The Freeland League also became increasingly involved in Yiddish cultural matters. This development was partly driven by the growing involvement of Yiddish writers in setting the agenda for post-war Territorialism. In turn, the engagement with Yiddishism attracted those who were active on the Yiddish cultural scene.

Despite its limited size, Territorialism collected a diverse group of sympathisers from different political and cultural backgrounds. To name two: staunch assimilationist Lucien Wolf supported the ITO, while arch-Zionist-turned-religious-dissenter Nathan Birnbaum affiliated himself with the Freeland League in the 1930s. Before and after the Second World War, the Freelanders kept strong ties with heterodox Zionist movement Brit Shalom and its follow-up Ihud. These connections challenge Territorialism’s supposed marginality. They also contribute to a more thorough analysis of these movements and individuals. For instance, Brit Shalom has been understood as a

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 113.

³⁹ Rovner concludes that both Zionism and Territorialism relied on counterfactual literary language to sell their projects, which may explain why so many literary figures were involved in both movements: Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 6-7, 223-4.

predominantly German-Jewish intellectual undertaking.⁴⁰ Its connection to the Freeland League shows this image to be only partially true, as outside of the Zionist context Brit Shalom—and Ihud for that matter—also resonated with a much more international Jewish audience. Moreover, Hans Kohn's active Freeland-membership in the 1950s and '60s demonstrates that, even though he had left Brit Shalom and Zionism, he had not abandoned Jewish politics altogether.

It was obviously important for the Freeland League to advertise its wide network. At the same time, Steinberg and his circle also believed that they should clarify that Territorialism appealed to a broader public than just intellectuals and other *Prominenten*.⁴¹ In 1953, for example, *Freeland* published the story of M. Mendel, a homeless London Jew who tragically died after falling into an excavation site. Mendel was a Hungarian Jewish immigrant, who became homeless in old age. Together with a phonograph, he had passed his days on Petticoat Lane in Whitechapel and became a known local figure. After reading about the Freeland League in 1940, he established contact with the Freelanders in 1946. When he died, the Freeland League received a substantial sum: it turned out that for years the old man had been collecting the silver coins that passers-by had given him and deposited them in a bank account, to be donated to the Territorialist cause.⁴²

As the Territorialists' continued activities demonstrate, neither the destructions of the Holocaust nor the attainment of Jewish statehood meant the end of their belief in the necessity of a Territorialist settlement. On the contrary, the establishment of Israel posed new threats to Jewish moral, religious, and cultural values; threats that a Territorialist alternative could help to avert. In 1953, under the header 'What is Freeland Doing?', *Freeland* looked back on the Freeland League's activities of the previous twenty years. It did this

with a troubled mind to be sure, but also with a clear conscience. Its activity consisted in propaganda for genuine goals, even if they were little understood in our people. It warned against the utopian messianic hopes

⁴⁰ Steven E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), ch. 1, esp. 14-5.

⁴¹ Steinberg to Ben-Adir, 17 November 1940, YIVO RG394, Box 2.

⁴² 'In The Freeland League', *Freeland* 7, no. 2 (March-April 1953): 16.

which accompanied the “conquest” of Israel; it sought to assure our people of additional opportunities for its national future.⁴³

Zangwill had already expressed reservations regarding Palestine during his Zionist days; after his departure from the movement, this critical stance became even stronger. Until 1917, he did not believe that any kind of Jewish autonomous settlement in Palestine was a realistic option. The issuing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 would not alter this view. On the contrary, the Declaration and what he saw as Zionist passivity and general political misbehaviour now became the main targets of Zangwill’s relentless verbal and written attacks, which did not cease until his death in 1926.

A non-Territorialist, but remarkable critique of Zionism (and one close to Zangwill’s vision) came from George Bernhard Shaw, who wrote to the former ITO-leader’s widow in 1936. Edith Zangwill had asked Shaw to give a public talk about her late husband at a Jewish event. In his masterfully phrased reply, the famed writer declined the invitation, since he was already *persona non grata* in Jewish (Zionist) circles. He added: “There is another point on which I am unsound from the Zionist outlook. When Balfour sold Jerusalem to Weizman for scientific tip that cheapened cordite considerably I exclaimed ‘Another Ulster!’ [...] The National Home catchword is nonsense.”⁴⁴

Steinberg’s objections to Zionism were more fundamental: he opposed Jewish statehood on moral rather than merely on practical grounds. Also, in the eyes of the Freelanders the years that had passed since the ITO-days had amply demonstrated the many problems that the *yishuv* faced in Palestine. Steinberg would therefore certainly not have agreed with Anita Shapira’s conclusion that “the great Zionist adventure” was a largely successful state-building endeavour, “with no loss of the moral principles that guided it.”⁴⁵ The Freeland leader acutely felt that these moral principles were being severely challenged; the Zionist state-building project in Palestine was inherently morally flawed. Years later, the New Historians of the 1980s and ‘90s would echo this view.⁴⁶

For Zangwill, the Arab presence in Palestine had always been a problem, but this insight had never led to an equally cautious stance towards the native populations of the ITO’s own aspired places of settlement. A first investigation of the prospected settlement

⁴³ ‘What is Freeland Doing?’, *Freeland* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1953): 1.

⁴⁴ George Bernard Shaw to Edith Zangwill, 21 September 1936, CZA A330/153.

⁴⁵ Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 475.

⁴⁶ Anita Shapira, “The Strategies of Historical Revisionism,” in *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right*, eds. Anita Shapira and Derek Jonathan Penslar (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), 66.

area in Mesopotamia in 1907 showed that at least 10,000 Jews would be needed to keep the local Bedouins “in their place”. The ITO leadership did not see this as objectionable and it was therefore not one of the official reasons why the plan was abandoned. Zangwill even naively thought that the old kinship relationship between Jews and Arabs would help to solve the issue.⁴⁷

After 1948, the “Arab Question” became the main focus of the Freelanders’ criticism of Israel and it formed the basis for their close bonds with Zionist pacifists and the Ihud movement. In 1952, Lesser Fruchtbaum summarised the problematic elements of Palestine in the eyes of the Territorialists. In addition to its unsafe geographical location, tense political situation, limited economic resources, undesirable militarisation of Jewish life, and rigidity in forcing Hebrew as the only Jewish language upon its inhabitants, Fruchtbaum mentioned the security risk of bringing many Jews together in such a hazardous place.⁴⁸

Eventually, however, the Territorialists realised that the existence of the new Jewish state entailed a total transformation of Jewish political thinking. In 1950, in a letter of appreciation to several people who had helped in the organisation of a fundraising bazaar Steinberg wrote that “[w]e are especially cognizant of the fact that at this moment when so many Jewish people are carried away by slogans of “either-or”, you, dear friend, have remained faithful to our cause”.⁴⁹ Some years later, in 1958, Leftwich wrote to Mordkhe Schaechter, enclosing a list of people he considered still potentially interested in the Territorialist project. He pointed out that he couldn’t “say how they feel about it now, when the State of Israel absorbs the minds of the great majority of such Jews”.⁵⁰ Schaechter shared this observation, when he concluded in 1960 that, apart from the Territorialists, only the Bundists (who had become as marginal as the Freeland League) were still critical of Zionism.⁵¹

This criticism of Zionism’s moral flaws did not render Territorialism itself morally flawless in the eyes of a current-day observer. The Freelanders supported geopolitical trends that seem contradictory to their simultaneous attachment to internationalism and

⁴⁷ Jewish Territorial Organization, “Mesopotamia. Report to the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organization,” (1907), 24-5.

⁴⁸ Lesser Fruchtbaum, ‘Israel And Freeland’, *Freeland* 6, no. 3 (Feb.-March 1952): 5-6. D.B. Tchernin adds to this that the history of the area did not inspire much hope for a safe future there: D.B. Tchernin, ‘The Road That Can Lead to Catastrophe’, *Freeland* 7, no. 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1953): 7-8.

⁴⁹ Steinberg to various recipients, 1 March 1950, YIVO RG682/503.

⁵⁰ Leftwich to Mordkhe Schaechter, 19 August 1958, YIVO RG682/465.

⁵¹ Draft letter Schaechter to the “friends” at *Dos Freie Wort* on the occasion of the periodical’s anniversary, 26 March 1960, YIVO RG682/326.

universal moral values. Throughout its history, the Territorialist movement hoped to attain an “empty” or “sparsely populated” territory within one of the colonial empires. Moreover, in line with accepted contemporary discourse, racist language was a common feature of the discussions of this or that potential place. Even when referring to the Jews themselves, the Territorialists often spoke in racial terms. This was not as odd as it may seem: racism was *en vogue* until well into the twentieth century. However, it does seem incomprehensible how Territorialists could be so attached to the “empty space” concept in connection to their own colonisation, whilst stressing time and again that the “emptiness” of Palestine in the Zionist imagining was a myth. It may be helpful to consider the difference between “colonialism”, referring to the domination of people, and “colonisation”, which only refers to a territory.⁵² It is clear that the Territorialists aspired the latter: Jews were to become colonists, but not colonisers. By focusing on the land, the question of the people could more easily be ignored.

Another apparent contradiction in the Territorialists’ thinking lies within their attachment to human rights and their positive evaluation of (forced) population movements. Matthew Frank helps to make sense of this seeming anomaly by arguing that within the reality of the immediate post-war period, transfers of populations offered a way of solving the minority issues without resorting to violent expulsions and physical extermination. This method was therefore perceived as peaceful in comparison to the recent experiences of war and genocide. Moreover, Rovner convincingly argues that the Territorialist approach to its projects, relying on a *Realpolitik* based on scientific discourse, expeditions and commissions, “reveals how a scientific application of settlement ideas aimed to alter Jewish reality and geopolitics”.⁵³ Population transfers were thus morally acceptable and even desirable to internationalists like Steinberg and his cohort.⁵⁴

Insightful in this light is also Dirk Moses’ recent reassessment of Arendt’s supposed humanist and universalist, anti-totalitarian position. According to Moses, there were clear limitations to the “civilizational ideal and its countenance of violent expansion” in Arendt’s thinking. Increasingly, she denounced not colonial and racist practices, but

⁵² Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 14.

⁵³ Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 6-7.

⁵⁴ Matthew Frank, “Reconstructing the Nation-State: Population Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-8,” in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-9*, eds. Jessica Reinisch, Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 33.

Soviet power and expansion, which she wished to see combatted at all costs. Hers was a Eurocentric perspective on world politics, in which the decolonisation process was a sign of the imperial powers resisting totalitarian tendencies, and not of the colonised wresting themselves free from foreign domination. Arendt's later rejection of the way in which Palestinians were being turned into second-class citizens was not accompanied by an appreciation for the Palestinian independence struggle, but based on a more general denunciation of nationalist practices in which the nation subsumed the state.⁵⁵ Gil Rubin adds that Arendt's rejection of the Zionist treatment of the Palestinian Arabs was the result of her attachment to federalism. She rejected any form of statehood that would render either the Jews or the Arabs the majority, as she did not believe in the functionality of such a structure. Nonetheless, in her assessment, she had first and foremost the Jewish wellbeing in mind.⁵⁶

At first glance, it seems that these analyses of Arendt's pragmatic thought show striking similarities with the Freeland League's behaviour in the same period. After all, the Territorialist attachment to population exchanges and the notion of "empty spaces" could be considered rather illiberal tendencies. Also, like the ITO before them, the Freelanders negotiated with colonial governments, and only when political realities compelled them to do so—as in the case of Surinam between 1946 and 1948—did they turn to the colonised for support. However, this conclusion would not do justice to the genuine engagement with moral causes and the commitment to general human betterment that underlay many of the later Territorialist writings and thought.

Isaac Steinberg was the main architect of these ideas. In 1955, he published an article in *Judaism*, entitled 'Yavneh or Jerusalem'. This text, written only two years before his death, could be considered a summary of Steinberg's views on what the Jewish future was to look like (and on how the State of Israel did not represent this picture). The article shows Steinberg as a traditionalist, idealist, and revolutionary.⁵⁷ In the text, he praised

⁵⁵ A. Dirk Moses, "Das Römische Gespräch in a New Key: Hannah Arendt, Genocide, and the Defense of Republican Civilization," *The Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 4 (2013): 874-5, 893, 895-7, 905, 907-8, 910. Ron Feldman, in his introduction to Arendt's collected Jewish works, paints a somewhat different picture in which Arendt explicitly embraced the *yishuv* because it had been a conscious product and not a colonial one: Ron H. Feldman, "Introduction: The Jew as Pariah: The Case of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975)," in *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, eds. Ron H. Feldman and Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), lix.

⁵⁶ Gil Rubin, "From Federalism to Binationalism: Hannah Arendt's Shifting Zionism," *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 3 (2015): 393-414.

⁵⁷ Isaac N. Steinberg, "Yavneh or Jerusalem?," *Judaism* 4, no. 3 (1955), reprinted in Willy Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg in London Und New York*, vol. 40, Russica Palatina (Heidelberg: 2002), 94-101. Hugo Bergmann, whose views were in many ways similar to those of Steinberg, reached the opposite conclusion

the ancient Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, who, when Jerusalem was under attack by the Romans approached the Roman commander Vespasian and requested not that Jerusalem be spared, but that Yavneh, the centre of Jewish scholarship, be preserved. According to Steinberg, this decision created the basis for the “*spiritual* survival” of the Jewish people for the two thousand years that followed, “on a non-political, non-territorial, non-economic basis”. Thanks to this decision, the Jewish Diaspora gained its significance for Jewish culture and religion: Steinberg saw a clear link between Yavneh and Wilna, by which he did not only mean the city of Wilna, the “Jerusalem of Lithuania”, but Eastern European Jewish life in general. Yavneh/Wilna represented “*Judaism in action: Yiddishkeit*”.

During the previous two millennia, Steinberg continued, the Jewish people had witnessed, but managed to stay aloof from the statism that had been so damaging to the societies in which they lived. All of this changed with the arrival of the Jewish state. Could, in this new situation, Yavneh and Jerusalem exist together, merged into one new concept? Here Steinberg resorted to his own experiences in the Russian Revolution. This event, he claimed, had been morally and intellectually prepared like no other revolution preceding it. “Yet rarely has a people, in so short a time, been so thoroughly drained of its moral capital by its new regime, as has the Russian people.”⁵⁸

The Russian experience should serve as a lesson for the young Jewish state and for the Jewish people as a whole: “The change-over from a glorious spiritual path, albeit lacking political power, to a route strewn with the glittering symbols of state-power and military prestige, appears to be a hazardous one.” “Shalom” or peace, he explained, had never meant the end of hostilities and the marker for victory, but “a positive ideal of friendship and cooperation between individuals and nations”. This was “*Yavneh-Yiddishkeit*” (or “*Gayst-yidishkayt*”, spiritual Yiddishness⁵⁹). How to retain this spirit? Steinberg recalled Vladimir Jabotinsky’s call for “some sort of a decent anarchy, and inasmuch as this is impossible, [...] at least [...] a ‘minimalitarian’ state”.⁶⁰ Most importantly, Steinberg warned against “human assimilation”, which was worse than the national assimilation that the Zionists deplored:

regarding Ben Zakkai’s choice. According to Bergmann, this had been a grave mistake as it cut off Jews from their soil: Maor, “Moderation,” 88.

⁵⁸ Steinberg, “Yavneh or Jerusalem?”, reprinted in Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg*, 94-9.

⁵⁹ Willy Birkenmaier, “Judentum Ohne Rückkehr Nach Palästina: Isaak Steinberg und der Territorialismus als Alternative zum Zionismus,” *Trumah*, no. 19 (2010): 94.

⁶⁰ Steinberg, “Yavneh or Jerusalem?”, reprinted in Birkenmaier, ed. *Isaak Steinberg*, 94-101.

Human assimilation would mean that the traits of the Jewish *ethos* would be altered, falsified, stultified. Human assimilation would mean that not the Jew in the Man, but the Man in the Jew is confronted with a great spiritual and moral threat. And this assimilation cannot be prevented by the mere fact that strong walls against national assimilation are being erected, in the form of language, territory, state, army, patriotism, economic autarchy. The instruments of *Yavneh* seem better fitted to overcome the threat.⁶¹

Eventually, Steinberg believed, the era of statehood would come to an end, and with *Yavneh* as its guiding spirit, the Jewish people would be more than ready for this change: after all, “[i]n the midst of the Jewish people stood not the majestic throne of royalty [statehood], but the invisible glory of the Mount of Sinai [moral and divine revelation]”.⁶²

As we have seen throughout this study, the Territorialists were often frowned upon by their political rivals. Other prominent contemporaries who were more detached from Jewish affairs looked upon them with distant admiration. Still, however the Territorialists were regarded, they were most definitely *known*. More often than not they were even directly connected to those who did eventually make it into the annals of history.

This “connectedness” inspired an aging and nostalgic Leftwich to write to his friend, the American publisher Allen Lesser, from his holiday destination Tel Aviv in 1971:

Half the streets here are named after people we know. It gives me a strange feeling of having been in on the making of history.

Love, Lefty⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., 101.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Leftwich to Allen and Fran Lesser, postcard stamped 22 October 1971, CZA AK609, folder 2.

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